Cheshire East Local Plan

Local Plan Strategy Submission Version

March 2014

Cheshire East Council

Foreword

Local Plan Strategy - Submission Version

It is three years since the consultation began on our Local Plan. So far we have received around 37,000 responses from members of the public about our draft proposals. This is an unprecedented amount of interest in a document that will be the blueprint for Cheshire East to the year 2030. The Local Plan is a keystone for the future of the area and supports our number one priority – jobs led growth. The plan has been developed to support the generation of jobs focused around Crewe High Growth City / M6 Corridor and the North Cheshire Science Corridor, for which we have been granted £800 million of central Government funding. In addition there is an allowance for extending employment sites in our Principal Towns, Key and Local Service Centres. Our challenge is to achieve this whilst ensuring the beauty and character of Cheshire East is retained.

This plan is about developing Cheshire East to maintain its reputation as the best place to live in the north west, whilst providing for our younger generation so they can live and work in the area they grew up in. It is about the future, job availability, excellent educational standards and a great quality of life. This plan, coupled with our five year housing supply, is also about protecting the residents of Cheshire East against unwanted, unsustainable and unplanned development.

Over the last three years, we have evaluated over 100 strategic sites to ensure sustainability. This has included their accessibility to public services, open spaces and transport as well as their potential impact on heritage and health. Contained in this document is the final list of 37 proposed sites and nine strategic locations that we want to adopt. In arriving at these sites we have considered comments from a large number of stakeholders including the residents of Cheshire East; Town & Parish Councils and developers. We have been grateful for the assistance and guidance from the Planning Advisory Service, Planning Officers Society and the Department for Communities and Local Government and their advice has been used to produce a robust plan that meets all statutory guidelines.

I believe it must be one of the most comprehensive and consulted Local Plans to have been produced in England. I would like to thank everybody who has contributed to this process and would especially like to thank the large number of people who have responded in support of our plans. Some people will be pleased with the result and others will be unhappy, this plan has taken all views into considerations and I believe it meets the requirements of Cheshire East residents both now and through to 2030.

This document is a key milestone in the process and any further representations/comments will be collated and forwarded to the Government Planning Inspector for consideration.

Following on from the submission of the Local Plan to the inspectorate our next task is to make site allocations for our small towns and villages. This will take the form of consultation with local Town & Parish Councils and voluntary organisations to ensure that we meet employment and housing requirements to meet local needs.

Thank you once again for your interest and continued involvement. Keep up to date with how the plan is progressing by visiting www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/localplan

Cllr David Brown

Cheshire East Council - Strategic Communities Portfolio Holder and Deputy Leader of the Council

Preface - Preparing a New Local Plan

It has been no small task to bring this Local Plan to the threshold of submission to the Secretary of State. The process began with our three predecessor Boroughs – and good progress was made, only to be undone by the discord and disruption of Local Government Reorganisation. Cheshire East has had to grapple with not only the novel geography of a completely new Borough but also a much changed planning landscape, with the abolition of Regional Plans and the advent of the National Planning Policy Framework.

The preparation of this plan has responded to these circumstances by seeking to marry broad and strategic objectives with local issues that are relevant and familiar to individual communities. Engagement at all levels has been widespread. Some 36,000 responses to the developing Local Plan have been received since the work began in 2009 with the initial Core Strategy Issues and Options Paper consultation underway in November and December of 2010. This allowed us to gauge views on the appropriate quantum and distribution of growth for the area – and also highlighted the need for more work at a 'grass roots' level.

The following Place Shaping Consultation in the Summer and Autumn of 2011 entailed working with local communities, businesses and stakeholders to understand the future challenges we face, town by town, village by village. Three sets of Town Strategy consultations followed for each of the eleven Principal Towns / Key Service Centres. Town plans were drafted by local bodies (Town Council, community partnerships, business representative and other local bodies), consulted upon and approved by the relevant local bodies (mainly Town Councils). These helped shape the initial selection of Strategic Development sites.

Based on these proposals and the outcomes generated by the consultation work on them, we then embarked upon the next two key tasks in developing a well founded Local Plan. The first was the Development Strategy and Policy Principles consultation, of January and February 2013. This presented the Council's preferred policy and site options and its non-favoured alternatives. Responses to this Local Plan consultation revealed a number of additional possible strategic sites that developers and landowners considered suitable for inclusion in the Local Plan.

In order to address these, the subsequent Possible Additional Sites Consultation, in May 2013, had the purpose of giving members of the public and other interested parties a chance to have their say about these new sites prior to the Council making a decision on whether any of them should be included within the Local Plan. The outcomes of all of the preceding work, further informed by the consultation responses, culminated in the publication of the Pre-Submission Core Strategy. This set out the Local Plan's draft overall vision and strategy for planning in the Borough and draft allocation of strategic sites and locations for development. A major consultation on this pivotal document ran between 5th November and 16th December 2013.

There followed the penultimate tasks of logging, analysing, and applying to the developing Local Plan, the many thousands of responses we received on the draft from individuals, local communities, developers, organisations and partner agencies. This document is the culmination of this work and represents the product of over 4 years of Plan making at Cheshire East.

Adrian Fisher

Head of Strategic and Economic Planning, Cheshire East Council

Your Views and How to Comment

This document is the Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy – Submission Version. It sets out the case for sustainable economic growth and represents the strategy the council wishes to adopt to deliver a vibrant sustainable community and for the management of development in Cheshire East up to 2030. It also presents the evidence to support that position.

This Submission version has been informed by a number of information sources including:

- The involvement of key stakeholders and local communities during various consultation phases
- National and Local Planning policies
- Evidence from a number of studies about the Borough
- Recommendations from appraisals, assessments including the Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment, amongst others

At the public examination, the Inspector will be considering the 'soundness' of the Local Plan in the context of the requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Localism Act 2011, the Town and Country Planning (Local Plan) (England) Regulations 2012 and other relevant regulations and government guidance.

You now have the opportunity to make representations on this submission document. Representations at this stage should only be made with respect to the legal compliance of the Local Plan and to its soundness. Representations should specify in what respect(s) the Plan is considered to be "unsound" and what change(s) would be needed to be made to make it sound.

The grounds of 'soundness' are:

- **Justified** (founded on a proportionate evidence base and the most appropriate strategy when considered against the reasonable alternatives);
- **Effective** (deliverable and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities);
- **Consistent with national policy** (predominantly set out in the National Planning Policy Framework);
- **Positively prepared** (the plan should be based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements).

Viewing the Local Plan Strategy - Submission Version

If you would like to view copies of the Local Plan Strategy you can do so online at www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/localplan or at our Customer Service Centres, libraries, Cheshire East Council's headquarters at Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach and the Planning Helpdesk, Municipal Buildings, Crewe.

Making Comments

Comments on the Local Plan Strategy – Submission Version should be made using the online consultation portal at www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/localplan. You can also pick up a paper comments form from your local library and return it to the Council's Headquarters at Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach, CW11 1HZ.

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The representations period runs from:

14th March 2014 to 25th April 2014

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Only representations received during the representation period will be considered. Anonymous representations cannot be accepted. The Council asks that representations are made

electronically where possible, to save time and money. However, representations made using the paper forms will, of course, be accepted.

Contacting the Spatial Planning Team

You can contact the Spatial Planning Team via:

- E-mail: localplan@cheshireeast.gov.uk
- Website: www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/localplan
- Telephone: 01270 685893
- Post: Spatial Planning, Cheshire East Council, Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach, Cheshire, CW11 1HZ

Please note that the Freepost address used in previous consultations is no longer in operation. If responses are sent to that address they will not be received by Cheshire East Council.

What Happens Next?

At the end of the representation period, the Council will collate any representations made during the appropriate period and will submit them along with the Local Plan Strategy and supporting documents to the Secretary of State. The Local Plan Strategy will then be considered at a public examination by an independent Planning Inspector. Only those persons proposing a change to the Local Plan Strategy can expect to be heard by the Inspector.

The Council may ask the Inspector to recommend additional changes that may be necessary to make the Local Plan Strategy 'sound' and will need to publish any main modifications for comment before the Inspector completes his report.

If the Inspector concludes that the Local Plan Strategy complies with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act and the associated Regulations; is sound in terms of section 20(5)(b) of the Act and meets the test of 'soundness' in the National Planning Policy Framework, with or without modifications, the Council will then be able to adopt the Local Plan Strategy.

Once the Local Plan Strategy is adopted by Cheshire East Council, work will continue on the Local Plan Site Allocations and Development Policies Document, which is the next part of the Local Plan. This document will allocate remaining sites for future development and provide detailed policies to be used when considering planning applications for new development across the Borough. A Local Plan Waste Development Plan Document will also be produced which will set out policies for dealing with waste and identify specific sites for waste management facilities.

Data and Statistics

The sources of data and statistics in this document are referenced using a footnote system. All data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) is licensed under the Open Government Licence v.1.0.

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Overview

1.1 The Local Plan is the Statutory Development Plan for Cheshire East and is the basis for determining planning applications. This Local Plan Strategy document sets out the overall vision and planning strategy for development in the Borough and contains planning policies to ensure that new development addresses the economic, environmental and social needs of the area. It also identifies strategic sites and strategic locations that will accommodate most of the new development needed.

1.2 The Borough is a generally affluent area, especially in the north and is a sought-after place to live and do business. There are however some pockets of deprivation, particularly in Crewe.

1.3 The previous overall approach to accommodating development, as set out in the Regional Spatial Strategy, was one of development restraint reflective of the extensive coverage of Green Belt in the Borough and the intention to foster urban regeneration in Greater Manchester and Merseyside in particular.

1.4 Like the country as a whole the Borough was hit by the recent recession; house building rates in Cheshire East fell in the late noughties to less than half of those achieved earlier in the decade.

1.5 However Cheshire East remains well placed in terms of its inherent locational, environmental and labour force resources, to achieve significant economic growth in the medium to long term.

1.6 Due to its various attractions the Borough is a net importer of people from neighbouring areas.

1.7 The Local Plan seeks to meet the full objectively assessed needs for development. On top of this the Plan aims to accommodate a realistic element of economic growth-derived development need.

1.8 Although there are some inevitable overlaps with urbanised neighbouring places, particularly south Manchester and the Potteries, Cheshire East's housing market areas are largely contained within the Borough.

1.9 The Borough's housing needs arise across the whole Plan area. Those towns inset within the Green Belt have been constrained from growing for many years which has inevitably impacted on local retail and other services.

1.10 However good, justifiable reasons are needed to change the extent of the Green Belt. The pre-requisite question that needs to be asked is could places neighbouring Cheshire East accommodate any of the development needs arising in the Borough and so reduce the need to roll back Green Belt boundaries?

1.11 The answer from neighbouring local authorities is that they are not in a position to assist, however other than High Peak Borough Council, they have not asked Cheshire East Council to accommodate any of their development requirements.

1.12 There are no other significant restraints that can legitimately be cited to justify holding back development in Cheshire East. The north eastern extremity the Borough is within the Peak District National Park but that area is excluded from the Local Plan area as the Borough Council is not the Local Planning Authority there.

1.13 There are no significant flood risks in the Borough that are an impediment to new development nor are there any other naturally occurring environmental features within Cheshire East or nearby that present such constraints. The effective operation of the Jodrell Bank radio telescope does not pose a significant restriction on new development.

1.14 The Local Plan seeks to accommodate a proportion of the local development pressures at the Green Belt constrained towns by rolling back Green Belt boundaries around these settlements. Enabling development in this way also contributes to the overall sustainability of these places.

1.15 However overall there is some redistribution of the growth arising in the Green Belt towns to settlements elsewhere in the Borough – particularly to those in the centre and south.

1.16 A new area of Green Belt is proposed in the vicinity of Crewe and Nantwich to ensure settlements here do not coalesce whilst still leaving appropriate scope for further development in the Plan period and beyond.

1.17 Following the previous constraints on development in the Borough it is inevitable that there will be some delay in achieving economic growth and gearing up the delivery of new development.

1.18 Housing and employment development is proposed in the Plan in a variety of locations and sizes of site that provide an appropriate range and choice of opportunities. Some of these development locations are required to be serviced by significant new infrastructure.

1.19 The delivery of development sites is programmed to reflect their infrastructure requirements and the likely availability of associated funding.

1.20 The financial viability of the range of development sites is generally good across the Borough and the Council is committed to maximising developer contributions to infrastructure delivery by introducing the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Background

1.21 Its **vibrant** and **successful economy**, rich **natural environment** and **strong sense of community**, makes Cheshire East one of the **best places to live and work in the UK**.

1.22 The Borough has a strong **industrial heritage**: the Railway Industry in Crewe, the Silk Industry In Macclesfield and Congleton and the Salt Industry of Middlewich and Nantwich. Not only has that resulted in the distinctive physical and cultural landscapes that are seen today, but it has also set the foundations for the **strong entrepreneurial culture** which continues to permeate through the area.

1.23 In conjunction with historic industrial centres, vibrant and **historic market towns** located throughout the Borough, with their attractive and varied townscapes and concentrations of listed buildings, provide high quality living and working environments, and are a key part of the Borough's visitor economy. Many are also designated as conservation areas. Their rich historic environment provides the focus for vibrant and **locally distinct communities**, with a strong sense of place and self. They also provide a valuable link to **rural communities**, which are equally vital to the wider economy and local identity. Their conservation and enhancement is extremely important, to ensure that communities remain genuinely sustainable, retain their individual character and maintain their important economic function.

1.24 The richness and diversity of the built and cultural heritage, and highly attractive townscapes and landscapes provides **Cheshire East** with its own very **unique character and identity**.

1.25 The objective for the future of Cheshire East is to deliver:

1.26   This Local Plan Strategy is the spatial interpretation of that vision and sets out how the economy can continue to thrive by providing **new land for development**, whilst **minimising the impact on the natural environment**.

1.27   The overall growth proposition is to deliver over **27,000 new homes** by 2030 and **20,000 jobs** in the longer-term. These figures represent a **pro-growth** policy position that is forecast to see the Borough's population grow by around 40,000 people. Policies in this Plan will also make sure that the right mix of new homes is provided to meet the needs of a growing workforce and support both current and future employers. This is set within the demographic context that Cheshire East will have a 26% increase in over 65s and a 35% increase in over 85s by 2021.

1.28   The Local Plan Strategy has been built up over many years of evidence gathering and following extensive consultation with residents. It aims to make the **most effective use of land** and development across the Borough to deliver the overall vision. The Plan has been guided by the extensive body of evidence detailed in Appendix D and the findings of Sustainability Appraisals and Habitats Regulations Assessments carried out at each key stage of the Plan's evolution.

1.29   The policy principles underpinning the vision are to:

- Develop brownfield sites, where possible, to minimise the use of greenfield, Green Gap, open countryside or Green Belt sites.
- Ensure a town-centre first policy to support our main urban centres and deter out of town development.
- Deliver new homes of the right quality, in the right location at the right price; providing access to low cost and affordable housing to support our growing economy.
- Support new development with the right new infrastructure; our plan proposes at least eight miles of new roads and substantial upgrades to our overall transport network.
- Focus new housing development in strategic locations through the creation of a new sustainable urban village and urban extensions, rather than a dispersed growth model that would undermine the well defined character and strengths of our market towns and smaller villages.

1.30   It is three years since the consultation began on developing this blueprint for Cheshire East to 2030. Since then, about **37,000 consultation responses have been received, and over 100 strategic sites evaluated.** There are **31 strategic sites, 10 strategic locations and 6 safeguarded sites proposed in this Plan**.

1.31   All the potential sites have been fully considered against policy principles and vision, the extensive evidence base in its entirety, national planning policy and the findings from the Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessments as well as information received from the many consultation events. This is a complex process but the selection of sites and strategic locations proposed in this Plan are considered to be the most appropriate when considered against the reasonable alternatives and will facilitate the delivery of the overall vision and strategic priorities set out in the Plan.

1.32   The Council has carefully considered and taken account of, where appropriate, the wide range of comments received at each stage. Further detail on the preparation of the Local Plan is contained within Appendix F: 'The Local Plan for Cheshire East' and Appendix G: 'Evolution of the Local Plan Strategy'.

1.33   Cheshire East is part of the Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), which is made up of business, local authority, academia and voluntary sector representatives. The

Introduction

vision of the Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership is to make Cheshire and Warrington the best performing economy outside of the South East and the Local Plan Strategy seeks to contribute towards achieving that vision. The Local Enterprise Partnership can access funding from Central Government to deliver its objectives and overall vision.

1.34 Extensive dialogue and engagement from all neighbours has taken place over the course of the evolution and development of the Plan, thereby ensuring delivery on the Duty to Co-operate. Wide ranging partnerships with the Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and partners in Staffordshire and Greater Manchester are key to continued success and this Plan both complements those of our LEP neighbours in Greater Manchester and Staffordshire, and delivers fully towards the Cheshire and Warrington LEP ambitions.

1.35 This Plan sets out a core ambition, the overall strategic approach to accommodating growth including the identification of strategic sites and locations for development. It also sets out policy principles to be worked up in more detail at the next stage of the plan-making process. More detailed policies will flow as part of the next stage of the Local Plan through the development of the Site Allocations and Development Policies and Waste Development Plan Documents.

1.36 This Plan is strongly underpinned by a need to improve transport connections across the Borough. New projects are planned in all towns as part of the Plan, to address congestion issues. These include the Congleton Link Road, South Macclesfield Link Road, and improvements on the A51, A530 and A500 Barthomley Link.

1.37 The focus remains on protecting Green Belt, open spaces and the best agricultural land to make sure that growth is sustainable. However, some alterations to the detailed Green Belt boundary are required to provide the development land needed to deliver the vision.

1.38 The identification of Safeguarded Land between the urban area and the inner boundary of the Green Belt means that the permanence of the new Green Belt boundary will be secured. The safeguarded land is not proposed for development in this Plan but **may** be required post 2030 if a future review of the Plan identifies further needs for development.

1.39 In total, the Plan proposes detailed boundary amendments to the Green Belt that exclude an area of less than 1% of the total existing area of Green Belt in the Borough.

1.40 Following an extensive Green Belt Assessment**, a review of the extent and effectiveness of protection in and around Crewe and Nantwich is planned. A new settlement is also proposed to mitigate some of the impact on existing Green Belt.**

1.41 Protecting the **quality of the environment** is essential to the Plan. The Plan needs to make sure there are the right levels of Green Belt to protect from urban sprawl, and provide sufficient levels of **fertile agricultural land** to support the rural economy. The Plan also needs to nurture the local ecology and protect the natural **countryside and landscape** enjoyed by residents and visitors alike.

1.42 The Borough's **heritage and cultural** assets are key to the future as well as a trail to the past. They provide a vital contribution to the overall visitor economy, which has a turnover of £700m per year. They are also treasured by residents, and provide a valuable overall contribution to quality of life in the Borough. Key considerations incorporated in this Plan include continued protection of over **76 Conservation Areas, 47 Grade 1, 179 Grade 2* and 2,412 Grade 2 Listed Buildings,** and supportive policies in relation to the cutting edge science research and worldwide heritage associated with Jodrell Bank.

1.43 This Plan will provide for over 27,000 new homes by 2030. This does not mean house building to meet a false target, but a considered approach to meeting the needs of future demographic changes

and to make sure that current and future employers have a **skilled, local workforce who can support their growth**.

1.44   New homes are required to respond, not only to population increases and economic migration, but also to reflect the **changing nature of the way in which our communities are living**. People are living longer and whilst overall this is clearly desirable, it does mean we need to rise to the challenge of ensuring there is the right mix of accommodation, including Self Build and Key Worker Housing, to meet the needs of a changing population; particularly to make sure that as many people as possible remain independent for as long as possible. This is a core element of our vision for a vibrant, sustainable community, but it does also mean we need to provide the **right amount of future accommodation of the right type, in the right location**. At the next stage of the Local Plan process through Site Allocations and Development Policies document, there will be much more detailed policies about the quality, type, size and tenure mix of our proposed housing strategy.

1.45   Cheshire East currently benefits from **excellent quality health and education provision**, however this Plan will also make sure that our education and health provision is enhanced and developed to meet the growing and changing needs of our communities.

> **Only by ensuring through this Local Plan Strategy that all these elements are balanced and harmonised will we secure a healthy and prosperous future for the Borough**

The Context of the Local Plan Strategy

1.46   Cheshire East is a Unitary Authority with Borough status; created as part of Local Government Reorganisation in 2009 it covers the eastern part of the historic county of Cheshire. As a Unitary Authority, the Council is responsible for all Local Government functions including education, housing, planning, highways, leisure and recreation, environmental health, adult and social services and through its Health and Wellbeing Board, responsibilities for health in partnership with the NHS and other agencies (Police, Fire and the voluntary sector).

1.47   The Borough of Cheshire East is bounded by Cheshire West and Chester to the west; Warrington and the Greater Manchester conurbation to the north; Shropshire and the North Staffordshire conurbation of Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme to the south; and the Peak District National Park to the east.

1.48   Cheshire East is a large Borough, with many towns, villages and rural areas with over 100 Town and Parish Councils. The towns and villages vary greatly in character and each face differing issues and needs for the future. The Borough also has an extensive rural area with a successful rural and agricultural based economy. Cheshire East as an entity currently has an emerging sense of place and identity that this Local Plan Strategy aims to address.

1.49   The Local Plan, when it is fully adopted, will be the complete Development Plan for Cheshire East (replacing earlier Plans prepared by the former Districts and the County Council) and its policies will form the basis for planning decisions in the Borough. The Local Plan will cover a range of matters including:

- How much employment land is needed and where it should be provided;
- Protecting and improving important open areas and providing new ones;
- How many new homes will be required and where they should be located;
- Providing new transport infrastructure including roads, cycle routes and footpaths; and
- How town centres and community facilities in the Borough could be improved.

1.50   The Local Plan Strategy is the first part of the Cheshire East Local Plan. It sets out the strategic priorities for the future development of the area together with a suite of planning policies and proposals designed to deliver sustainable development.

1.51   This document represents the strategy the Council wants to adopt for the management of development in Cheshire East. It is called the 'Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy - Submission Version' and will also be used as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

1.52   The Local Plan Strategy sets out how the Council will deliver sustainable, jobs led growth by making the most effective use of land and development across the Borough. The economy in Cheshire East is already one of the most successful in the North of England. The Local Plan Strategy will make sure the right foundations are in place to sustain this success over the next 17 years.

1.53   The Local Plan Strategy covers all of the Borough of Cheshire East with the exception of the area in the Peak District National Park. Figure 1.2 shows the Borough in context.
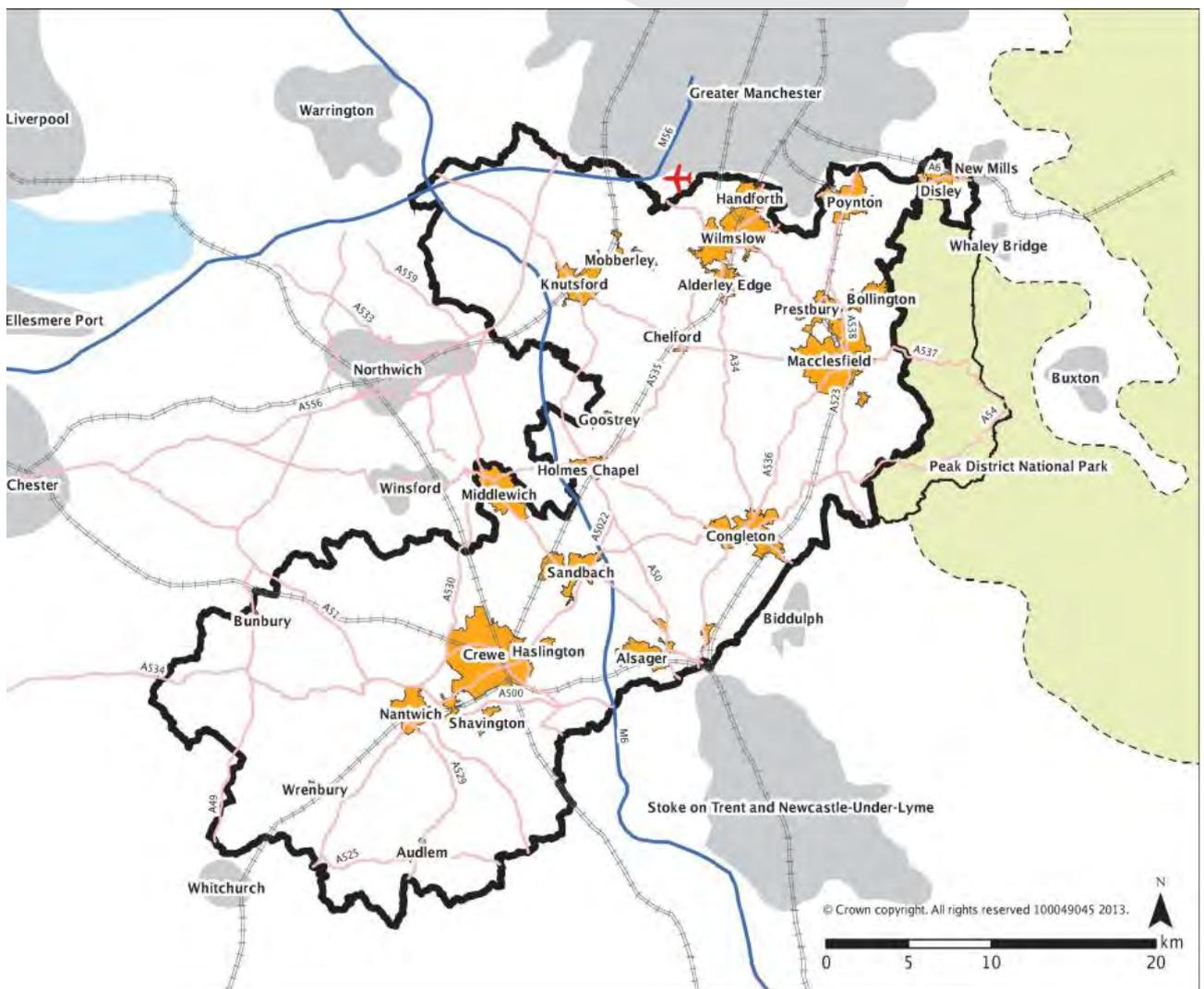
Figure 1.2 Cheshire East in Context

Diagrams and Maps

1.54   The presentation of this document is illustrated with a series of diagrams and maps. These have been produced to aid readers' understanding of the Plan area and the spatial application of the Plan's policies and proposals.

1.55   As this is the strategic part of the Local Plan, a number of the proposals are being put forward for broad locations with the precise, on the ground, boundaries to be defined later in the Site Allocations and Development Policies document.

1.56   Figure 1.1 'Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy Key Diagram' shows the approximate location of all the spatially specific policies and site proposals in the Plan.

1.57   In Chapter 15 there are Ordnance Survey based maps of each town showing the development related proposals, as well as commitments (strategic developments that already have permission) and larger scale maps of each site and strategic location. These maps are presented for illustrative purposes.

1.58   The definitive spatial application of the proposals that will be land allocations and consequential policy boundary changes are to be shown on the new Policies Map. This will be an update of the combined Proposals Maps produced as part of the previous Local Plans adopted by the former District and County Councils. At this stage the Policies Map is reproduced in an interim form showing the new proposed land allocations on top of the previously adopted designations using map extracts.

Introduction

2
Duty to Cooperate

2 Duty to Cooperate

2.1   In preparing the Local Plan Strategy, the Council is complying with the 'Duty to Cooperate', as introduced by the Localism Act 2011 and the NPPF. The Council has set this out in detail in its Duty to Cooperate Statement, which accompanies this document. Activities undertaken include:

- **Consultation with key stakeholders**: the Council has engaged and cooperated with the prescribed organisations and authorities, as set out in the legislation and regulations, and in compliance with its adopted Statement of Community Involvement;
- **Collaboration and cooperation in plan making:** the Council continues to work jointly with partners to address key planning issues across the area; and
- **Consideration of cross boundary impacts:** The Council has engaged proactively with neighbouring and other related authorities in considering and addressing strategic and site-specific cross-boundary impacts arising from both Cheshire East's plans, and others' plans.

2.2   It should be noted that this Duty is an ongoing process and does not stop with the adoption of the Local Plan Strategy. The on-going basis for future co-operation will vary according to the degree of cross-boundary synergy that exists and the related extent of collaboration that is appropriate. Where close joint working is needed on a number of fronts memoranda of understanding are being developed to formalise relationships and guide future actions.

2.3   The Council already has a strong and established record of commitment of collaboration and cooperation with neighbouring authorities and other key stakeholders. For example, the Council is actively involved with the Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership on a range of initiatives, has worked closely with Stockport Council in relation to the former Woodford aerodrome development, and will continue to play an active role on groups relating to Manchester Airport, HS2 and South East Manchester Multi Modal Study (SEMMMS).

2.4   Part of the role of the Local Plan Strategy is to address the wider implications of the local policy approach and to manage cross-boundary effects together with those plans and strategies of other authorities and agencies. A number of potential cross-boundary impacts have been taken into account of in the preparation of the Local Plan Strategy including:

- Housing growth and regeneration - to ensure that Cheshire East provides for its own housing needs, whilst limiting any impacts of this on the adjoining authorities' ability to regenerate their own urban housing areas.
- Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople - to assess the need for and provision of accommodation.
- Employment development - to ensure that Cheshire East provides sufficient employment land to meet its own legitimate economic growth aspirations without undermining investment in neighbouring areas.
- Transport - to mitigate the congestion effects of development generated movements.
- Green Belt - to minimise the loss of Green Belt land in the Borough in ways consistent with the sustainable location of new development and balanced with retaining the openness of the countryside in the long term.
- Infrastructure -to establish the means to provide for all the infrastructure needed to help deliver the development proposed in the plan.
- National Park / Recreation - to protect the natural attractions of the area and cater sensitively for visitor trips.
- Minerals – to ensure an appropriate supply of Cheshire East's key mineral resources is planned for, including a contribution towards the North West's sub-national aggregate apportionment.

- Waste - the need to deal appropriately with locally-generated waste in ways that minimise dependence on neighbouring areas.
- Transport - to ensure effects of development generated movements are mitigated against.

2.5 Progressive iterations of this Plan have directly addressed specific cross boundary issues raised by neighbouring authorities and consultees. Full details of the changes / shared understandings are referred to in the Duty to Co-operate Statement and are summarised below:

- Reduced development proposed south east of Crewe with less land to be removed from the Green Belt and a proposed new Green Belt in the Crewe/Nantwich area.
- A housing requirement figure that does not adversely impact on neighbouring areas and assists with housing needs in High Peak.
- A consistent approach to new development in and around Middlewich.
- A consistent pan-Cheshire policy approach for accommodating travelling people.
- A commitment to improve transport connectivity between Cheshire East and North Staffordshire.
- An agreed position on cross boundary school place provision.
- A revised National Park fringe policy.
- Consistent cross boundary approaches to flood risk assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment.
- Agreed understandings on planning for minerals needs and reserves as well as dealing with waste needs, movements and management facilities.
- A comprehensive understanding of the Plan area's infrastructure requirements that address any cross boundary implications.
- A commitment to improved transport connectivity between Cheshire East and North Staffordshire.

3
Spatial Portrait

3 Spatial Portrait

3.1   The Spatial Portrait sets out what Cheshire East and the surrounding area is like in 2014. It looks at 'Cheshire East's Key Characteristics' before painting a picture of each of its 'Principal Towns', 'Key Service Centres' and 'Local Service Centres' followed by a brief overview of the 'Other Settlements and Rural Areas'. Finally, the Spatial Portrait looks at the characteristics of and linkages with the 'Surrounding Areas'.

Cheshire East's Key Characteristics

3.2   The key 'Economic', 'Social', 'Environmental' and 'Connectivity' characteristics of the Borough are set out in the sections below.

Economic

3.3   The economy of Cheshire East is diverse and generally vibrant. The Borough provides 7% of the economic output in the North West[1] and 7.6% of the region's businesses - the highest share of any North West Unitary or District authority[2]. Its residents make up a significant proportion of the 'knowledge economy' workforce that drives the region: around 68,000 of its residents work in managerial or professional occupations - which is higher than in any other North West unitary or district authority apart from Manchester[3]. Cheshire East performs better than the regional and UK averages in skill levels[4], business start ups[5] and knowledge-based employment[6].

3.4   The number of people employed in the chemical and pharmaceutical industry and in Research and Development (R&D) is significantly above the Great Britain average with particular concentrations in the former Macclesfield district, for example AstraZeneca[7]. There is a relative abundance of jobs (significant net inflows of commuters, in other words) in Crewe, Handforth and Knutsford, whereas Alsager, Congleton, Middlewich, Poynton and Sandbach face a relative shortage of jobs (a significant net commuting outflow). Macclesfield and Nantwich have more modest net outflows, whilst Wilmslow's inflows and outflows are broadly equal[8]. The rural nature of the Borough is reflected in the relatively high number of people employed in agriculture which is above the England average[9].

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1   Regional GVA (Income Approach) NUTS3 Tables, Office for National Statistics (ONS), Dec 2013. Commentary based on data for 2012.
2   Business Demography 2012: Enterprise Births, Deaths and Survivals, Nov 2013. Commentary based on data for 2012.
3   Annual Population Survey, Oct 2012 – Sept 2013, ONS, NOMIS. Crown Copyright. Commentary relates to Standard…and 2 (Professional Occupations)
4   Annual Population Survey, Jan-Dec 2012, ONS. Based on the proportion of the working-age (16-64) population who had a qualification at or above NVQ Level 4 (first degree level) as of 2012
5   [1] Business Demography – 2012: Enterprise Births, Deaths and Survivals, ONS, Nov 2013. [2] ONS mid-year population estimates 2012. ONS Crown Copyright 2014. ONS licensed under the Open Government Licence v.1.0.Commentary based on data for 2012 and relates to the business birth rate (births…16+).
6   Annual Population Survey, Oct 2012 – Sept 2013, ONS, NOMIS. Crown Copyright. Commentary relates to the proportion of…Major Groups 1 and 2).
7   [1] AstraZeneca website information on its employment at local sites. [2] Local knowledge about other local pharmaceutical industry employment sites. [3] Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) 2011 (for R&D) and 2012 (chemicals & pharmaceuticals), ONS, NOMIS. Crown Copyright. Chemicals & pharmaceuticals defined here as all activities that fall within SIC2007 codes 20 & 21 and R&D…72
8   [1] Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) 2011, ONS. [2] 2011 Census data on the numbers of local residents (of each town) who are in employment. Net commuting flows were calculated by deducting residence-based employment (Census figures) from workplace-based employment (BRES figures)
9   [1] June 2010 Agricultural & Horticultural (A&H) Survey, Defra. [2] Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) 2010, ONS. The BRES excludes farm-based agricultural employment from its Local Authority estimates, so Cheshire East's agricultural employment share was calculated by taking the June 2010 A&H Survey estimate and dividing by total employment (2010 BRES figure plus the A&H Survey estimate)

Labour Force

3.5 The 2013 Strategic Housing Market Assessment data shows that over two-thirds (69%) of Cheshire East's economically active residents place of work is in the Borough.

3.6 An estimated 173,500 people were working in Cheshire East in 2012, as either employees or working proprietors. Of those working as employees (167,000), 69% were full-time and 31% part-time. 13% of employees worked in the health and social work sector, with professional, scientific and technical activities (12%), manufacturing (11%) and retail (10%) also accounting for a large proportion of the employee total[10].

Income Levels

3.7 The latest available average (mean) household income figure (2010) for Cheshire East is £39,900 per year, however there are significant differences in income levels across the Borough.[11]. Seven towns and major settlements have a mean income below the Cheshire East average; of these, five (Alsager, Congleton, Crewe, Nantwich and Sandbach) are in the south of the Borough; only Handforth and Macclesfield are in the north. Conversely, high mean incomes are more prevalent in the north of the Borough; Knutsford, Poynton and Wilmslow are all above the Cheshire East average (as is Middlewich further south). Mean incomes are also above the Borough average in Cheshire East's rural areas. This is shown in Figure 3.1 below.
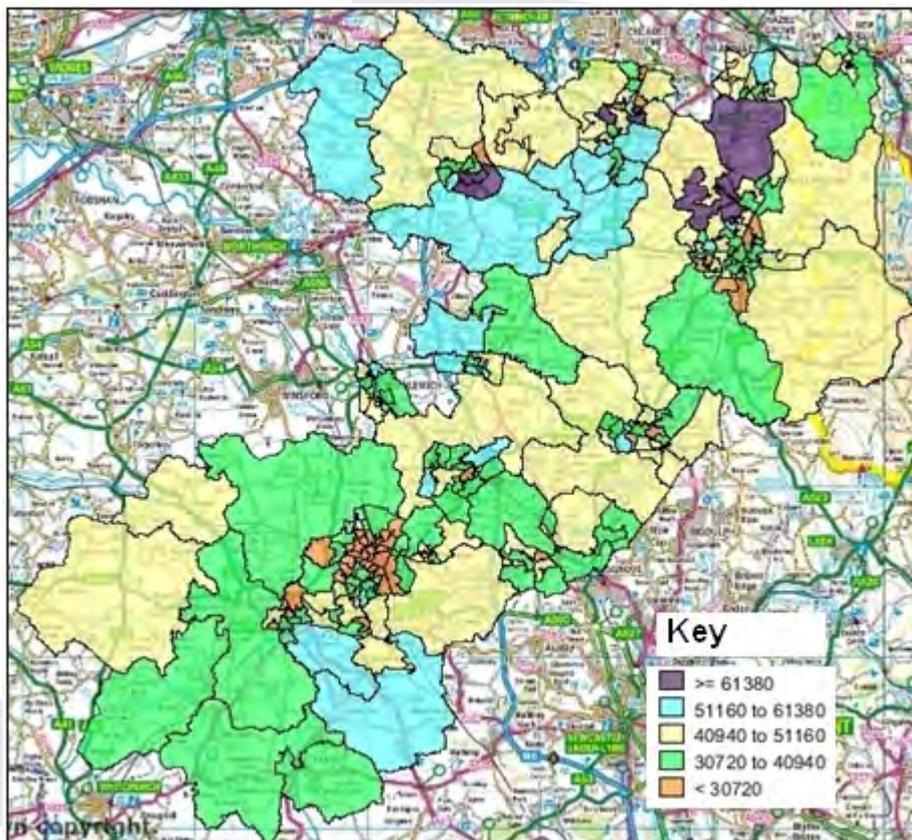
Figure 3.1 Mean Average Yearly Household Income in Cheshire East (£)

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10   Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) 2012, ONS, NOMIS. Crown Copyright.
11   2010 Paycheck data, CACI Limited.

Spatial Portrait

Skills

3.8   The Borough has major educational assets, in terms of skills development and knowledge transfer, in the form of Manchester Metropolitan University at Crewe and three Further Education colleges: South Cheshire, Reaseheath and Macclesfield. Jodrell Bank is of great scientific significance as a leading facility for radio-astrophysics and scientific research in the UK.

Manchester Airport

3.9   The closeness of Manchester Airport provides considerable economic benefits to the Borough by providing access to national and international markets as well as supporting a substantial number of jobs, both directly and indirectly. In 2011, the Airport was estimated to contribute £627 million of Gross Value Added for the North West Region, supporting over 17,000 onsite jobs and 40,000 in the wider sub-region[12].

Mineral Working

3.10   Mineral extraction plays an important role in both the local and wider economy. The mineral resources worked in Cheshire East are silica or industrial sand, construction sand, sandstone, salt (in brine) and peat. Permitted mineral sites are situated across the Borough as illustrated in Figure 3.2 below.
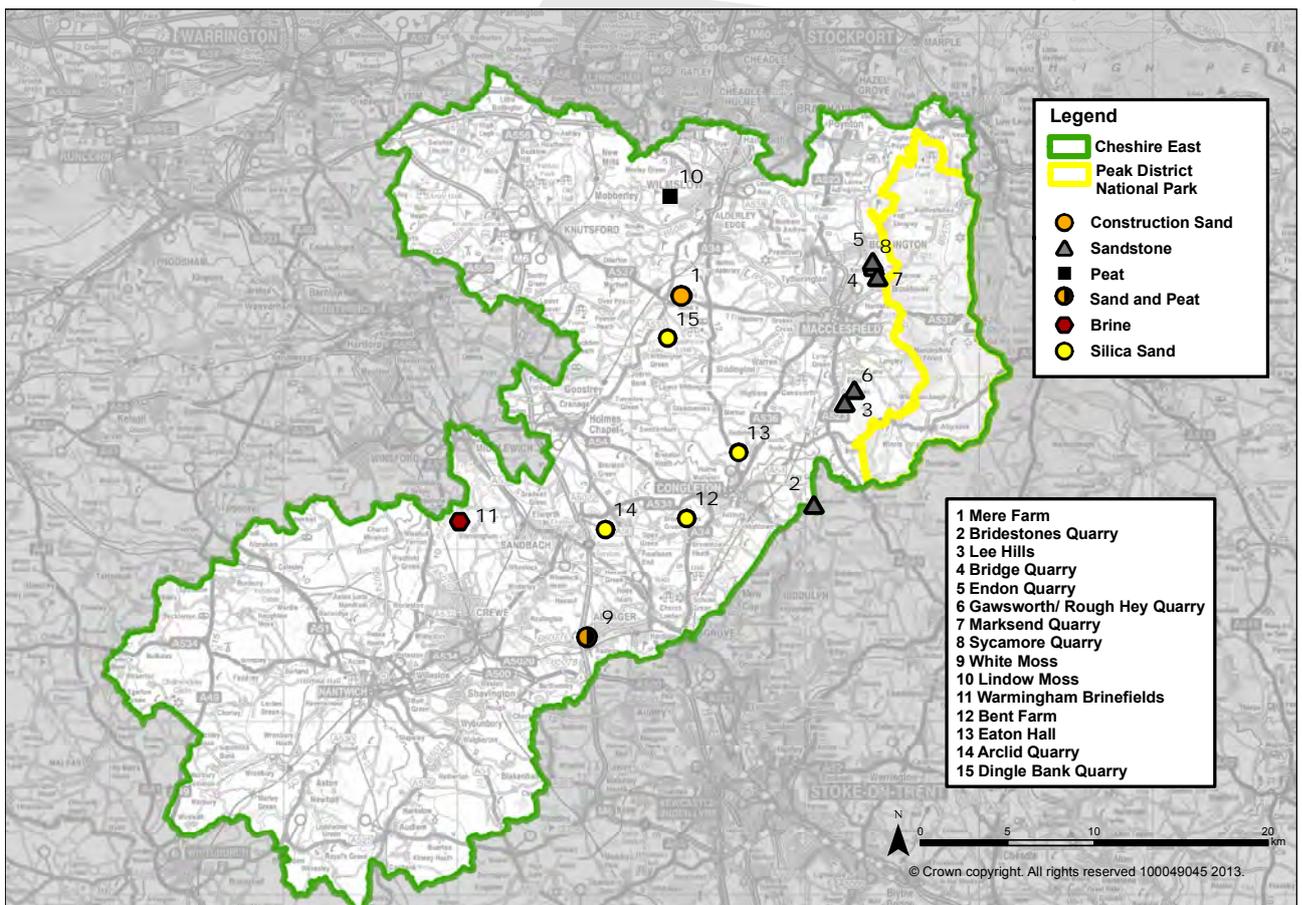
Figure 3.2 Mineral Sites in Cheshire East

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12   York Aviation Study (2011)

Waste Management

3.11 Evidence shows that about 870,000 tonnes of waste were generated in Cheshire East in 2009. This is predicted to fall to about 797,000 tonnes by 2030 [13]. The principal types of waste arising in Cheshire East are municipal (including household), commercial and industrial (C&I), construction, demolition and excavation (CD&E) and hazardous. The way in which waste is managed has been changing significantly with decreasing amounts being disposed of to landfill and increasing amounts being recycled.

Figure 3.3 Mineral Operations and Waste Collection in Cheshire East

Retailing

3.12 Cheshire East has a diverse retail offer, ranging from a mix of central and out-of-town multiple retailers in our larger towns, to stronger niche independent retailing in some of our smaller towns. In common with most of the country, some of our town centres have struggled in the face of changing consumer trends, particularly the growth in retailing via the internet and competitor destinations offering a larger mix of retail and leisure. However, there is evidence that new investment can recapture a larger share of local consumer expenditure and footfall, which is an approach being driven forward through regeneration programmes led by the Council with the support of our business communities.

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13   Urban Mines (2011) 'Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester Councils - Waste Needs Assessment Report'

Spatial Portrait

Visitor Economy

3.13   The visitor economy is an important contributor to the Cheshire East economy with about 10,000 jobs associated with the tourism industry and a turnover of £700 million[14]. Major attractions include Tatton Park, Jodrell Bank, Lyme Park, Quarry Bank Mill, the canal network and the Peak District National Park.   There are 14 National Trust properties in Cheshire East and one partially located in the Borough. Little Moreton Hall, Nether Alderley Mill, Tatton Park, Lyme Park and Quarry Bank Mill are all examples of National Trust Properties. Additionally, the extensive footpath, cycleway and bridleway network is a key attraction of the Borough.

Figure 3.4 Tourist Destinations: The Canal Network, Jodrell Bank and Tatton Park

Social

Local Housing Market

3.14   The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2010 and 2013 Update considers that, on the basis of migration and travel to work data, Cheshire East is an appropriate geography for planning purposes over which to assess and meet housing requirements and comprises of three functional housing market areas: one is focused on the former Macclesfield district and exhibits strong interactions with the South Manchester market; a second is focused on the former Crewe and Nantwich district and is largely self-contained; the third is centred around Congleton. At the Borough scale there are noticeable market interactions with North Staffordshire and South Manchester (see Figure 3.5)

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14   STEAM Report 2012, Marketing Cheshire. The figures relate to 2012 and turnover is in 2012 prices. The jobs figures includes indirect job creation
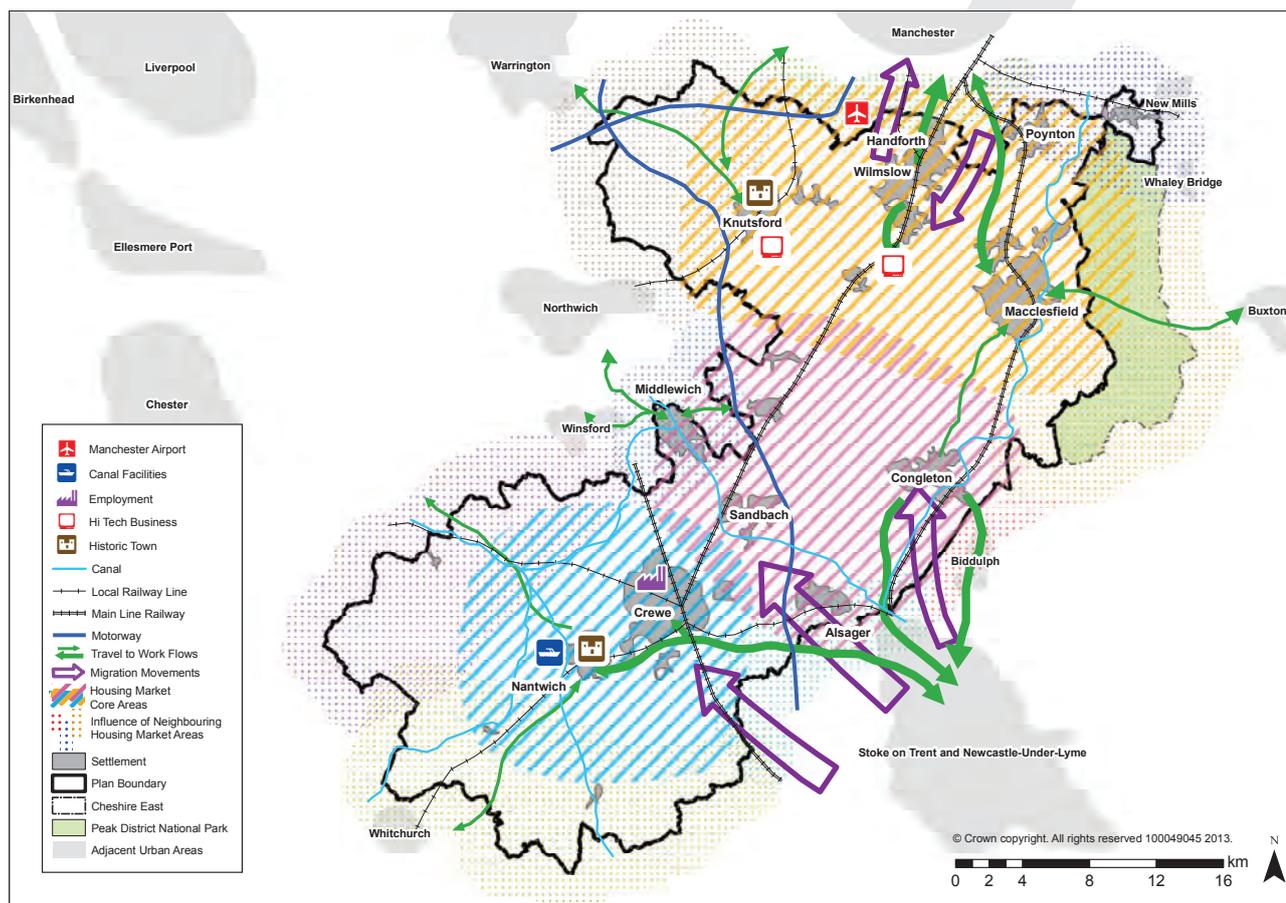
Figure 3.5 Cheshire East Functional Diagram

Population

3.15   Cheshire East has a population of 372,100, 51% (189,700) are female and 49% (182,400) are male[15]. This represents 0.66% of the population of England and Wales. The population pyramid in figure 3.6 shows the age distribution of Cheshire East residents. It reveals a lower than average proportion of both male and females for residents under the age of 40 compared to England and Wales. The proportions are particularly low (greater than one percentage point below the England and Wales average) for residents aged 20 to 34. Conversely, Cheshire East has an above average proportion of residents within each of the five year age bands over the age of 40. The relatively low proportion of people of working age and relatively high proportion of older people has implications for the housing needs of the population and for the future economic prosperity of the Borough.
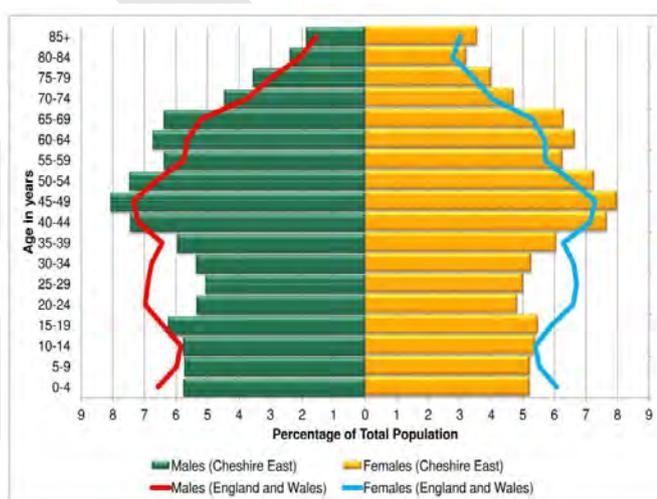
Figure 3.6 Population Pyramid for Cheshire East 2012 (Mid Year Estimates)

15   ONS mid-year population estimates 2012. ONS Crown Copyright 2014. Crown Copyright material is produced with the permission of the Office of Public Sector Information (OPSI)

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3.16   Over the ten year period from July 2001 until June 2011, an estimated 157,000 people moved into Cheshire East and 141,800 people moved out of the Borough. These estimates include people immigrating and emigrating and those moving within the UK. The result is a net in-flow of 15,200 people (an average of around 1,500 each year). Net migration was higher in the early part of this ten year period: for example, the average net migration per year between July 2001 and June 2006 was around 1,900, compared to 1,200 between July 2006 and June 2011[16].

Households

3.17   Information from the 2011 Census of population shows that in Cheshire East there were 159,400 households with an average household size of around 2.29 people. Housing need is expected to increase as a result of national trends, including predicted increases in the population and changes to household sizes resulting from an increased number of divorces and separations, and an ageing population. The 2011 Interim Household Projections show an increase in the number of households from 159,600 in 2011 to 170,000 in 2021. This equates to an average yearly increase of 1,000 households per year between 2011 and 2021.

House Prices

3.18   House prices across Cheshire East and its former Districts have increased dramatically over the period 1996 to 2012 from median house prices of £59,833 in 1996 to £174,950 in the autumn of 2012, with median prices peaking at £185,843 during 2007[17]. This represents an increase of 192% in median house prices over a 16 year period.

3.19   Cheshire East has a ratio of lower quartile house prices to lower quartile earnings of 6.51[18]. This means that the price of a house at the top end of the cheapest quarter of all houses costs 6.51 times the earnings of a person who earns the most out of the lowest quarter of all earnings. In terms of relative affordability, the Borough is ranked the sixth least affordable District in the North West[17].

Deprivation

3.20   The Index of Multiple Deprivation data (IMD 2010) combines a number of economic, social and environmental indicators to assess and identify levels of deprivation in a particular area. These indicators are then combined to provide an overall score identifying the level of deprivation at a Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) level.

3.21   There are 23 LSOAs in Cheshire East that are amongst the 25 per cent most deprived in England: most (fourteen) of these are in Crewe and three are in Macclesfield. Six other towns and major settlements each have a single LSOA that ranks among England's most deprived 25 per cent: Alsager, Congleton, Handforth, Knutsford, Nantwich and Wilmslow. Five LSOAs, all in Crewe, are amongst the 10 per cent most deprived in England. Conversely, there are 121 LSOAs in Cheshire East which are amongst the 25 per cent least deprived, which includes 71 that are amongst the 10 per cent least deprived[19].

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16   ONS mid-year population estimates 2002 to 2011: Components of population change. ONS Crown Copyright 2014. ONS licensed under the Open Government Licence v.1.0.
17   Cheshire East Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) update 2013
18   2012 Provisional Ratio of LQ Prices to LQ Earnings: Table 576, CLG
19   English Indices of Deprivation 2010, Department of Communities and Local Government

Environmental

Landscape Character

3.22   Cheshire East's landscape is characterised by the contrast between the extensive flat lowland plain and gently rolling farmland bordered to the west of the Borough with the distinctive sandstone ridge and to the east by the rising Pennine foothills. The landscape is characterised by glacial deposits, river valleys with wooded cloughs, unimproved features including mosses, heaths, meres and a number of designated parkland estates. There is also a diverse and valued range of flora and fauna in the Borough.

Nature Conservation

3.23   Key nature conservation sites are shown in Figure 3.7 below.
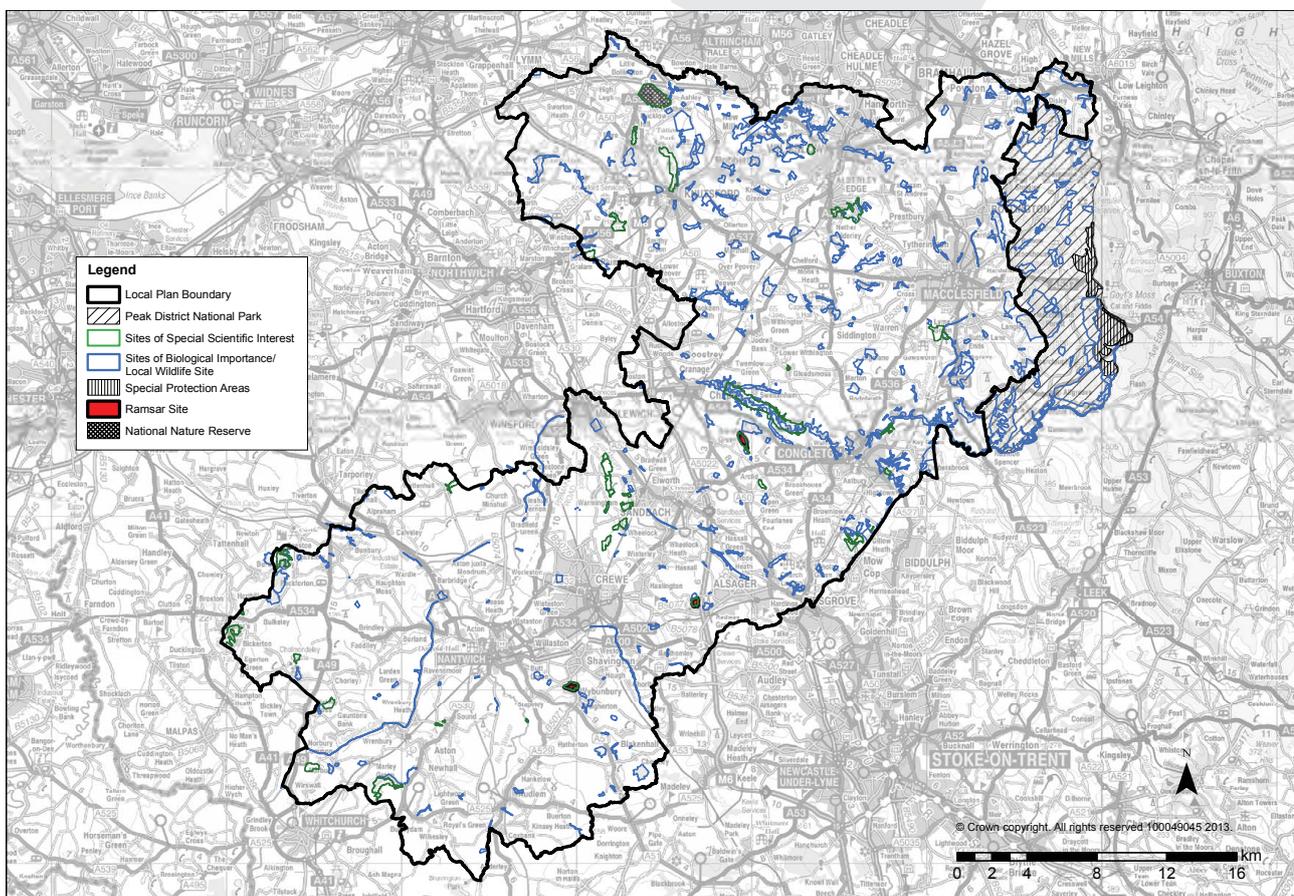
Figure 3.7 Key Nature Conservation Sites in Cheshire East

3.24   The most prominent environmental designations in Cheshire East are:

- The Peak District National Park;
- 1 Special Protection Area;
- 2 Special Areas of Conservation;
- 3 Ramsar designations (spread across nine component sites);
- 33 Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
- 2 National Nature Reserves;
- 416 Sites of Biological Importance / Local Wildlife Sites;
- 21 Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites;

Spatial Portrait

- 8 Local Nature Reserves; and
- 1,210 Tree Preservation Orders.
- The Meres and Mosses Nature Improvement Area

Historic Environment and Heritage

3.25 Cheshire East contains a valued, varied and unique heritage, which includes a number of cultural and environmental assets. These assets include Macclesfield's industrial heritage, Crewe's railway heritage, Tegg's Nose Country Park, Lindow Man at Lindow Moss, Bickerton and Peckforton Hills, Beeston Castle, the canal network, historic towns and parts of the Peak District National Park, amongst others. Other unique attractions include a wealth of Historic Parks and Gardens. The Borough also has a rich archaeological resource from the prehistoric period to the Second World War, including sites such as the Bridestones Neolithic chambered tomb, the Roman and medieval saltworking remains of Middlewich and Nantwich, the Saxon Sandbach Crosses and the defences of the former airfield at RAF Cranage. The Borough's historic built environment is complex due, for the most part, to the size and diversity of the area. Constituent areas are heavily influenced by their geological, landscape and topographical character, which invariably has heavily influenced their purpose, character and identity.

Figure 3.8 The Built Environment: Little Moreton Hall, Peckforton Castle and Nantwich Town Centre

3.26 Formal cultural designations present in Cheshire East include:

- 76 Conservation Areas of varying size and scale;
- 2,638 Listed Buildings covering different gradings;
- 108 Scheduled Monuments;
- 17 Registered Parks and Gardens of Historic Interest;

- 1 Registered Battlefield;
- 10 Areas of Archaeological Potential and 6,708 Sites of Archaeological Importance; and
- 387 Locally Listed Buildings.

Green Belt

3.27   Cheshire East has around 400 square kilometres of land designated as Green Belt, located in the northern and south eastern parts of the Borough. These form part of the Green Belts surrounding Greater Manchester and the Potteries conurbations.

Carbon Dioxide Emissions

3.28   Statistics indicate that, in 2011, Cheshire East's residents, commerce and industry and other non-residential energy uses resulted in carbon dioxide emissions of 3.159m tonnes. This equates to 8.5 tonnes of CO_2 emissions per person, which is more than the regional average of 7.0 tonnes per person. However, CO_2 emissions per person have fallen in recent years from 10.6 tonnes in 2005 and 9.2 tonnes in 2010[20]. This has implications for local, regional and national air quality.

Connectivity

3.29   The extensive road network in the Borough includes the M6 Motorway, which runs north to south through the centre of the Borough and the M56 running east to west at the northern end of Cheshire East. The M56 links to the M6 in the north of the Borough.

3.30   The rail network is accessible from 22 railway stations across the Borough. Crewe and Macclesfield are on separate branches of the West Coast Main Line giving access to Greater Manchester and London Euston. Central Government has announced plans for a High Speed 2 rail route from London, through the Borough and up to Manchester and beyond. The initial preferred route from the Department for Transport follows the West Coast Main Line, via Crewe, before passing to the west of Middlewich and through the High Legh area before splitting, with a line going north over the M56 to Manchester Airport and a separate line towards Wigan. Cheshire East Council is supportive of the economic impacts of High Speed Rail but wants to keep environmental impacts to a minimum.

3.31   Historic transport routes crisscross the Borough in the form of canals, railways and historic roadways, further enriching the built heritage of the Borough and influencing aspects of the townscape and development of towns and villages. A number of landmark structures are associated with the canals and railways, not least the viaducts across the Dane Valley to the east of Holmes Chapel and at Bollington. Many canal structures are listed, including bridges, locks and mileposts. The Trent and Mersey and Macclesfield canals are both designated as extensive, linear conservation areas.

3.32   In addition, Manchester Airport lies immediately to the north of the Borough, offering worldwide services.

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20   Local and Regional CO2 Emissions Estimates for 2005-11, produced by Richardo - AEA for the Department of Energy and Climate Change, Jul 2013. www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-of-energy-climate-change/series/sub-national-greenhouse-gas-emissions-statistics

Spatial Portrait
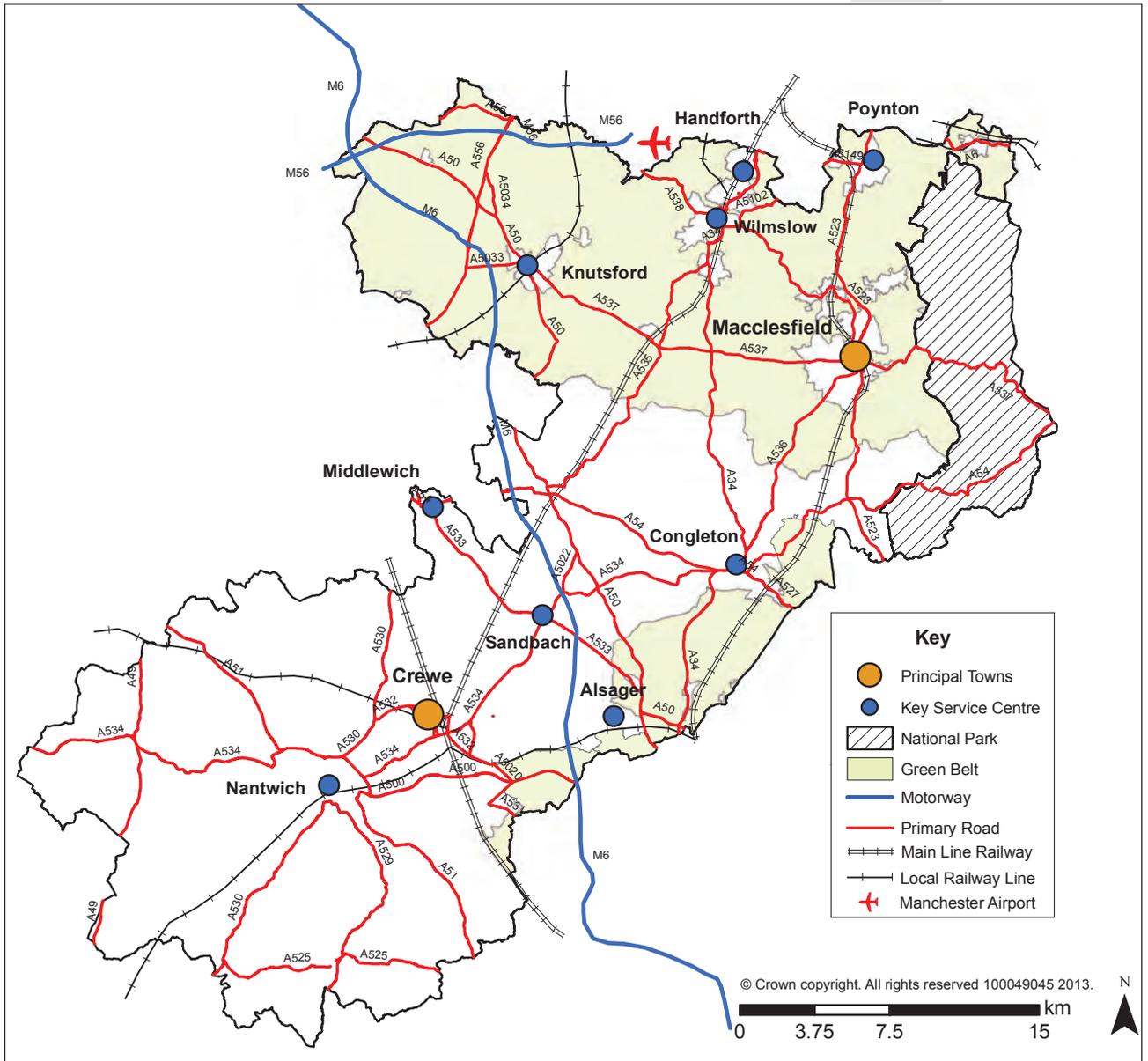
Figure 3.9 Connectivity Map of Cheshire East

Principal Towns

3.33   The Principal Towns of Crewe and Macclesfield are the largest settlements in the Borough. They provide a wide range of services and opportunities for employment, retail, education and leisure. They serve large catchment areas with high levels of accessibility and public transport provision. However, the two towns are very different in their history, character and urban form.

Crewe

3.34   Crewe is the largest town in Cheshire East, with a population of 73,400[21]. It is a major employment centre with a diversified base in education, manufacturing, services and distribution. Major employers include Bentley Motors, Mornflake, Leighton Hospital and Manchester Metropolitan University. Crewe is the primary shopping centre in the south of the Borough, but the town centre is

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21   ONS mid-year population estimates 2012. ONS Crown Copyright 2014. ONS licensed under the Open Government Licence v.1.0.

Spatial Portrait

in need of major investment. The town is also noted for the award winning Crewe Business Park, regarded as the country's first 'green business park'.

3.35   Crewe evolved around the growth of the railways, with the opening of the station in 1837 and the first works in 1840. Soon the industry was employing thousands of people and new housing was built alongside the expanding railway works. Within the centre of the town, the Town and Indoor Market Halls, churches and chapels and later, the Queens Park and Lyceum Theatre were all developed as part of the emerging social infrastructure of the burgeoning town.

3.36   Crewe is often referred to as the 'Gateway to the North West'. It was established as a major railway hub in the late 1830s and it remains a significant railway interchange on the West Coast Main Line with over 1.1 million passengers changing trains per year[22]. As a consequence of the existing railway infrastructure, there are problems with railway lines forming significant barriers to connectivity within the town.

3.37   Crewe's unemployment rate is higher than the Borough average[23]. In addition, Crewe residents have the lowest average (mean) income within Cheshire East[11]. Several parts of Crewe are particularly disadvantaged[19] and in parts of the town, male life expectancy is around 10 years less than in some of the more affluent areas of Cheshire East; for females, the gap is nearly 15 years[24].

Macclesfield

3.38   Macclesfield is the second largest town in Cheshire East, with a population of 52,500[21]. It is situated in the north eastern part of the Borough on the River Bollin. It is close to the borders of Greater Manchester to the north, and the Peak District to the east. Macclesfield is a unique town, with a proud history as a centre for commerce and business. This is best evidenced through Macclesfield's role in the silk trade and the town continues to play a leading role on the international stage through the science and pharmaceutical industries.

3.39   Macclesfield was established as a settlement in the 13th Century and later developed around the silk and textiles industries. Situated on the River Bollin, the early mills were located alongside the river, utilising the damp conditions and the power of the river for mill machinery. Present day industries include pharmaceuticals, plastics, architectural and engineering services and advertising and market research[10]. One of the world's largest pharmaceutical companies, AstraZeneca, is located at the Hurdsfield Industrial Estate in Macclesfield and also at nearby Alderley Park. In addition, many residents work in Greater Manchester.[25]

3.40   Today, Macclesfield stands as a bustling town centre with a number of unique attractions, including; the Silk Museum and the heritage centre, cobbled streets lined with independent shops and galleries, all on the doorstep of the rolling hills of the Peak District.

22   Station Usage Estimates 2011-12, Office of the National Rail Regulator, May 2013
23   December 2013 Claimant Count, ONS, NOMIS. Crown Copyright. [2] ONS mid-year population estimates 2012. ONS Crown Copyright 2014. ONS licensed under the Open Government Licence v.1.0.
24   Source: Life Expectancy at Birth, Department of Health. Figures relate to 2006-10
25   2001 Census, ONS. Crown Copyright. Note: At the time of writing, Census 2011 data were not yet available for commuting flows to and from individual Local Authorities.

3.41 Macclesfield has an important retail centre with just under 500 shops. The centre of Macclesfield characterised in part by its cobbled and meandering streets and narrow lanes is essentially a medieval street pattern, partly overlaid by later phases of the town's growth. The Cheshire East Strategic Planning Board granted consent in June 2013, subject to a Section 106 legal agreement, for the Silk Street Town Centre Redevelopment which proposes a cinema, shops, restaurants and offices. Although the northern part of Cheshire East is largely very prosperous, Macclesfield suffers localised problems, with some areas of the town experiencing multiple deprivation[19]. Its unemployment rate exceeds the Borough average[23].

3.42 There are a high number of listed buildings and structures concentrated in the centre of the town and also many that are quite widely distributed. Much of the town centre is designated as a conservation area and there are also several outlying conservation areas. A number of buildings are also locally listed. This illustrates the historic importance and significance of the town and reflects the strong identity, character and picturesque qualities of Macclesfield.

3.43 As a former mill town, Macclesfield's character and aesthetic are also proving to be its greatest burden; congestion, narrow roads and clear issues of connectivity between the rail station, town centre and a number of strategic employment sites mean that opportunities for development are limited.

3.44 The town is well served by bus routes. The railway station is on the West Coast Main Line with direct regular services to Stoke-on-Trent, Birmingham, Manchester and London Euston.

Key Service Centres

3.45 Cheshire East is characterised by its many smaller towns, each with its own distinctive history, character and form. These towns lie at the heart of the Borough, and their vitality and growth is essential for the prosperity of the Borough as a whole. Such towns serve as Key Service Centres for a wider locality and usually have a good range of facilities including shops, schools and cultural and leisure facilities.

3.46 The Key Service Centres of Cheshire East are: Alsager, Congleton, Handforth, Knutsford, Middlewich, Nantwich, Poynton, Sandbach and Wilmslow.

Alsager

3.47 Alsager is a small town in the south east of the Borough with a population of 11,800. It lies east of Crewe and is close to the Potteries conurbation to the south. It was a small farming village until the 19th century when, due to its rail connections and rural character, it became popular with managers from the nearby Potteries. During the Second World War, a large armaments factory was built outside the town at Radway Green and the town grew to house the influx of factory workers. This site, now with a range of occupiers, remains the town's largest employment location.

3.48 Alsager town centre stretches along the main street and has about 100 retail units. In addition, the town centre includes the recently remodelled Milton Park, a large area of public open space. Parts of the town are characterised by spacious tree-lined streets with attractive Villas and designated as Conservation Areas.

3.49 The number of jobs available within the area is low[8], although the unemployment rate is lower than the Cheshire East average[23]. Income levels are generally below the Cheshire East average[11]. One of the major employers in the town, Twyford, has closed its manufacturing operation (although its distribution operation remains open).

3.50   The town is served by several bus routes that provide access to Crewe, Hanley, Kidsgrove, Nantwich and Sandbach. The Railway Station, which is a short walk from the town centre, provides links to Crewe and Stoke-on-Trent, Derby, Lichfield and on to Northampton, Milton Keynes and London Euston. Junction 16 of the M6 motorway is a short distance away.

Congleton

3.51   Congleton is a large market town with a population of 26,700[21]. It lies on the River Dane in the east of the Borough. In its early days, it was an important centre of textile production, especially lace and leather gloves. Currently, the principal industries in Congleton include the manufacture of airbags. There are a number of light engineering factories and sand extraction occurs on the Cheshire Plain, although many of the town's residents work in Manchester, Macclesfield and Stoke-on-Trent[26].

3.52   Congleton has a reasonably vibrant town centre with about 260 retail units. Planning permission was granted in February 2012 for a retail development in the town centre that will increase the town's attractiveness. The development will take the form of an extension to the Bridestones Centre through to Mill Street, providing a new home for the town's market.

3.53   The town is served by several bus routes and has its own railway station with direct services between Stoke-on-Trent and Manchester. The M6 motorway is a short distance away.

Handforth

3.54   Handforth is a suburban area on the northern edge of Cheshire East with a population of 6,600[21]. In the 1950s, two overspill housing estates were built in the area to re-house people from inner city Manchester.

3.55   The town has a small shopping centre containing about 70 retail units. The Handforth Dean Retail Park to the east of Handforth contains a number of large format retailers.

3.56   Average (mean) household income levels are the third lowest in Cheshire East (out of 25 settlement areas)[11]. A large proportion of jobs in Handforth are located at the Stanley Green industrial estate and the Handforth Dean Retail Park. There is a very high level of in-commuting, particularly from Stockport.[27] There is a smaller, but still substantial volume of out-commuting (with the majority of residents working outside Handforth)[28].

3.57   There is no direct road access between the settlement of Handforth and Handforth Dean. Access to the Retail Park is only available from the A34 bypass. Once constructed, the A555 Manchester Airport Eastern Link Road will provide quick road access to the airport and M56 motorway, about 4 km to the north-west. Handforth has its own railway station with two trains per hour serving Crewe and Manchester. Regular buses serve Macclesfield, Manchester, Stockport and Wilmslow.

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26   2001 Census, ONS. Crown Copyright. Note: At the time of writing, Census 2011 data were not yet available for commuting flows to and from individual Local Authorities.

27   2001 Census, ONS. Crown Copyright. Note: At the time of writing, Census 2011 data were not yet available for commuting flows to and from individual Local Authorities

28   Sources for information on overall net commuting flow: [1] BRES 2011, ONS. [2] 2011 Census data on the numbers of local residents (of each town) who are in employment, ONS. Net commuting flows were calculated by deducting residence-based employment (Census figures) from workplace-based employment (BRES figures). Source for information on commuting flows to and from individual Local Authorities, such as Stockport: 2001 Census, ONS (2011 Census commuting data not yet available)

Knutsford

3.58   Knutsford is said to be named after King Canute, who by tradition forded the nearby River Lily. The town later prospered in the 18th and 19th Centuries and has many historic buildings. Today, Knutsford has a distinctive character and identity and contains a number of employment areas including Parkgate Trading Estate, Longridge Trading Estate, Booths Park, Radbroke Hall and others. The town has a population of 13,300[21]. It lies in the north east of the Borough approximately 19km to the south west of Manchester and 18km north west of Macclesfield. After the Second World War, overspill housing estates were created in the town to accommodate families from Manchester. The town has one localised pocket of deprivation which ranks among England's most deprived 25%[19].

3.59   Within the town centre, there are over 200 retail units, making it an important shopping centre in the Borough. There is a linear high street aligned by historic buildings of various periods, but principally Georgian, many of which are Listed and within the Conservation Area. The town thrived due to its close relationship with nearby Tatton Park, one of the key heritage assets in Cheshire East and the ancestral home of the Egerton family. Knutsford contains many buildings of architectural and historic importance.

3.60   There are daytime bus services linking Knutsford with Altrincham, Macclesfield, Northwich and Wilmslow. The railway station is centrally located and has one train per hour to Chester, Manchester, Northwich and Stockport. There are significant levels of out-commuting to Manchester, Trafford and Cheshire West & Chester[26].

Middlewich

3.61   Middlewich is a market town with a population of 13,700[21]. It dates back to prehistoric times with salt extraction from the Iron Age and throughout Roman times to the present day with British Salt employing around 125 people. The salt industry and the canals remain important culturally and economically. The closeness to the M6 motorway has led to the creation of a large distribution and business park at Midpoint 18.

3.62   The town centre has about 80 retail units and is centred on Wheelock Street. In recent years tourism has become increasingly important, with the annual Folk and Boat Festival being a notable attraction. The Trent and Mersey Canal runs through the town and is an important tourism and recreational resource. The canal is a Conservation Area, with a number of listed structures and the Mergatroyd Brine Works nearby, which is both listed and a Scheduled Monument.

3.63   Although a railway line passes through the town, it is currently used solely for freight movements. There is no railway station or passenger rail service within the town; during the development of a Local Plan Site Allocations and Development Policies document, an area of land will be safeguarded to explore the potential delivery of a new train station. Bus services provide access to Crewe, Holmes Chapel, Congleton, Northwich, Sandbach and Winsford. The M6 motorway is a short distance away, linked to the town by the A54. An Eastern Bypass for Middlewich has been partially constructed in recent years. The construction of the final section linking to the A533 Booth Lane to the south of the town will open up further land for employment development as well as improving environmental conditions in the town centre. The timing of this project, which is largely dependent upon private sector funding, is currently being programmed.

Nantwich

3.64   Nantwich is a historic market town with a population of 18,000[21]. It dates back to Roman times, when it was a centre for the production of salt. Nantwich has a thriving town centre with about 250 mainly independent units. The town contains more than 100 listed buildings, and has the largest concentration of historic buildings in the Borough. It is also a popular destination for tourists and visitors drawn from its large rural hinterland.

3.65   The centre of Nantwich is in essence a planned Elizabethan town, largely rebuilt as a consequence of a fire in 1583; the re-build partly financed by Elizabeth I. This has resulted in a re-created original street pattern and a number of fine timber framed buildings dating from the 16th century onwards. There are also a number of elegant Georgian and Victorian buildings. The centre of Nantwich contains a number of listed buildings and is designated as a conservation area. The town was also prominent in the Civil War and besieged until the Parliamentary victory in January 1664. The battlefield is designated and lies to the north of the town

3.66   Nantwich railway station lies on the Crewe to Cardiff line by way of Shrewsbury. Bus services are relatively good with regular services to residential areas of the town and to Crewe.

Poynton

3.67   Poynton's origins lie as a small mining village, however the decline of mining and its accessibility to Greater Manchester, led to significant growth during the 20th Century. Much of the mining infrastructure has therefore been lost as the town expanded, but remnants of the associated landscape still exist. It has a population of 13,000[21] and lies in the north eastern corner of the Borough, 11km north of Macclesfield and 8km south of Stockport.

3.68   The shopping centre has about 120 retail units. A programme of environmental improvements has recently been completed in the town centre.

3.69   Two buses per hour serve the town, providing links to Bollington, Stockport and Macclesfield. The Railway Station is on the western side of the town and has one train per hour serving stations between Manchester and Stoke-on-Trent.

Sandbach

3.70   Sandbach is a market town with a population of 18,100[21]. Its origins date back to Saxon times and it is widely famed for its weekly Thursday market and the ancient Saxon Crosses. It contains a number of areas and features of historical and architectural value as well as encompassing several significant areas of local environmental importance. The town grew around truck manufacturing industries, but since their closure in 2002 there have been significant changes in its employment base with considerable losses of manufacturing jobs.

3.71   At its heart are the characterful cobbled market square and Anglo Saxon crosses, which are both listed and a Scheduled Monument, along with a number of other key listed buildings. The wider town centre is also designated as a Conservation Area, with a number of other prominent buildings. The town also has strong associations with Sir George Gilbert Scott.

Spatial Portrait

3.72 The town centre has about 190 retail units. Sandbach is now the headquarters of Cheshire East Council, which is the town's largest employer.

3.73 There is a railway station on the edge of the town providing services to Crewe, Manchester and Manchester Airport. There are also frequent bus services to Congleton, Crewe, Northwich and Macclesfield. The town lies adjacent to Junction 17 of the M6 motorway.

Wilmslow

3.74 Wilmslow, with a population of 23,900[21] lies in the north of the Borough. The town is noted for its high quality housing and shopping as well as the historic Quarry Bank Mill and Styal Estate, making it a sought-after location. Wilmslow has developed beyond its historic core and has substantial late Victorian and Edwardian suburbs.

3.75 The town centre has about 230 retail units and is also served by the out-of-town Handforth Dean Retail Park. The town has a strong office sector both within the town centre and also on a number of large peripheral office parks. A large number of residents work in Manchester, with other significant commuter flows to Stockport, Trafford and Macclesfield town[26]. The nearby Manchester Airport is also a major employer.

3.76 The town has easy road access to the M60 and M56 motorways. Manchester Airport is 5km to the north. Access will be improved when the western section of the Manchester Airport Eastern Link Road is completed. Wilmslow has a local bus network serving destinations including Knutsford, Macclesfield, Manchester Airport, Manchester and Stockport. The Railway Station is on the West Coast Main Line and is served by local and long-distance services. Direct destinations served include London Euston and Manchester Piccadilly.

Local Service Centres

3.77 Local Service Centres are small towns or large villages which provide a range of services and facilities to meet the needs of local people, including those living in nearby settlements. They typically have a range of shops, health and leisure facilities, and employment opportunities.

3.78 Local Service Centres in Cheshire East are Alderley Edge, Audlem, Bollington, Bunbury, Chelford, Disley, Goostrey, Haslington, Holmes Chapel, Mobberley, Prestbury, Shavington and Wrenbury.

Other Settlements and Rural Areas

3.79 The remaining other settlements and rural areas contain fewer facilities, if any. As a result, people living in these communities generally have to travel to larger centres for jobs, schools, health care and other services.

Surrounding Areas
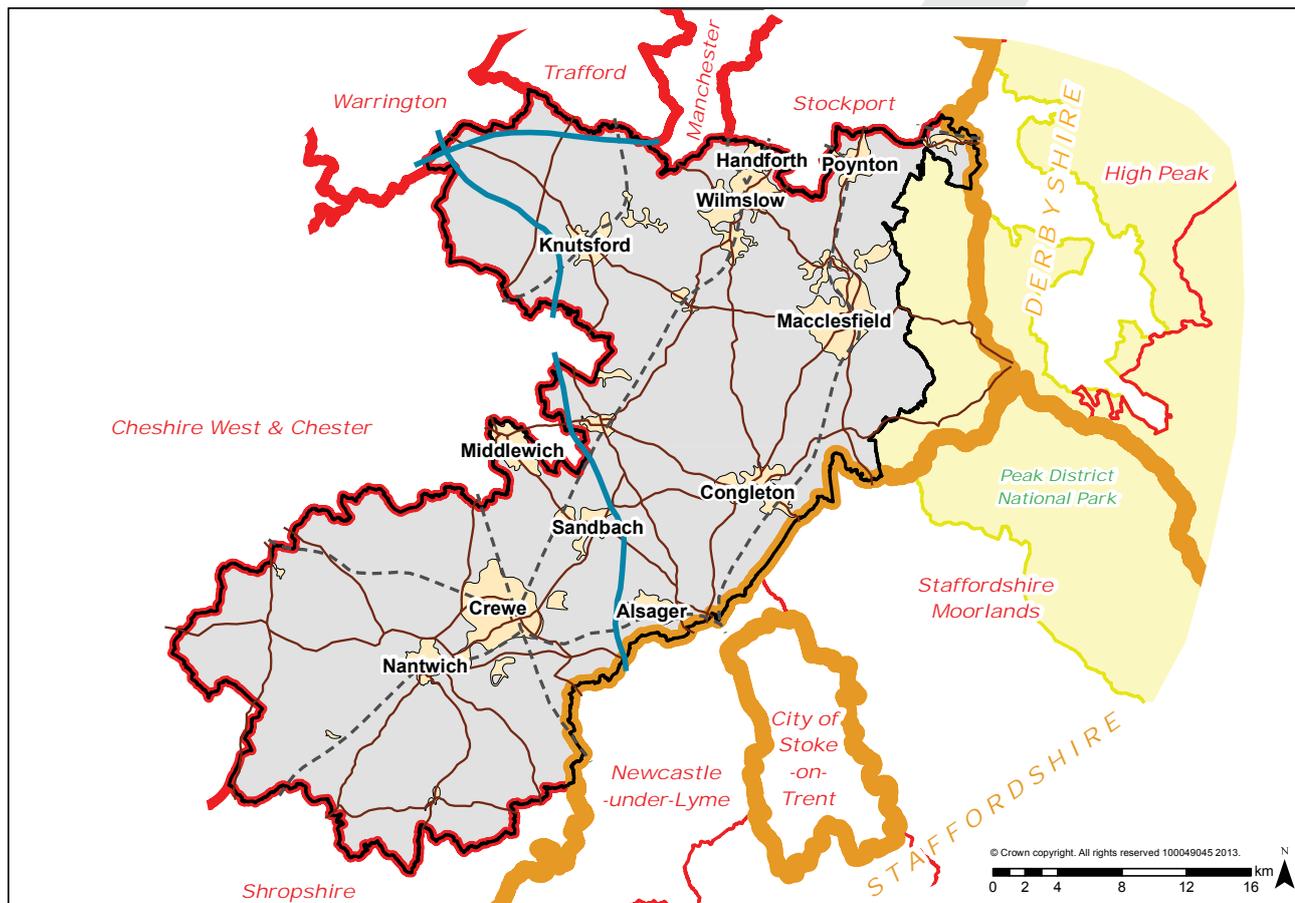
Figure 3.10 Neighbouring Authorities

The Potteries

3.80   North Staffordshire is known as 'The Potteries' after the porcelain industry that made the area world famous. The Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme joint Core Strategy identifies that the area faces significant economic and social difficulties and that these issues persist, despite government intervention, ongoing investment and the considerable efforts of many stakeholders to effect the transformation of the area.

3.81   The sub-region's topography and historical development has meant that the conurbation has developed as an unusual collection of distinct but connected settlements rather than a conventional single centre city structure. However the nature of this settlement pattern has, to some extent, amplified the adverse impacts of several decades of economic decline, decentralisation of services and employment, and out migration.

3.82   However, the Core Strategy also identifies the many assets of the area including: the valuable canal network, serving the region's growing leisure and tourism industries; the historical landscapes, townscapes and buildings of the sub region, which are irreplaceable, not only for their intrinsic architectural and aesthetic value and their contribution towards creating a collective sense of place and civic pride, but also for their contribution towards making the sub-region an economically attractive and competitive focus for inward investment.

Spatial Portrait

3.83 The North Staffordshire Green Belt surrounds Stoke and Newcastle with its northernmost extent covering part of Cheshire East (known locally as the South Cheshire Green Belt) – south of Alsager and Congleton and south east of Crewe.

3.84 Housing regeneration continues as a key policy initiative in the Potteries despite the reduction in government housing market renewal monies as there remains a high proportion of residential properties in sub-standard condition.

3.85 Despite its economic difficulties, the Potteries is still a focus for employment. Travel-to-work flows are particularly pronounced from the Cheshire East towns of Alsager, Congleton and Crewe. Although with respect to the latter two towns, there is an even greater reverse flow. **(29)**

Greater Manchester

3.86 Greater Manchester comprises the areas of ten Metropolitan Borough Councils. However the main commercial focus is Manchester City Centre and the adjoining city of Salford. The City Centre is the pre-eminent office, retail, cultural and educational location which has also seen substantial residential development in recent years particularly in the form of apartments. Salford, particularly the Quays area, has also experienced a great deal of regeneration particularly attracting media industries and other cultural activities. Trafford Park (within Trafford Metropolitan Borough) is the largest industrial estate in Europe.

3.87 The latest draft Greater Manchester Strategy identifies that Manchester's population is the fastest growing in the UK which presents a massive opportunity to link the jobs created with providing places to live that encourage people to stay and contribute to success. But it also presents huge challenges, including an ageing population and concentrations of unemployment coupled with low skills. Planned changes to the welfare system mean that demand for services will only increase unless there are radical reforms that improve the effectiveness of services, increasing the self-reliance of Greater Manchester's residents and reducing demand for those services.

3.88 The south side of the Greater Manchester conurbation is generally quite affluent and includes the substantial retail attraction of the Trafford Centre and nearby business opportunities at Trafford Park and Carrington. Manchester Airport is the third largest UK airport and is already a major employer. However this is set to increase significantly with the development of Airport City. Although the Airport is linked to the M56 motorway, further road connections on the Stockport / Cheshire East boundary are needed as part of the South East Manchester Multi Modal Strategy (SEMMMS) proposals. These comprise the A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road, but there are associated schemes, including connecting to the Poynton Relief Road in Cheshire East.

3.89 Greater Manchester is surrounded by Green Belt, which, on the south side of the conurbation, extends into Cheshire East covering the northern third of the Borough and known locally as the North Cheshire Green Belt.

3.90 Manchester City Centre is a major travel to work destination from all around the conurbation and beyond, including from the northern parts of Cheshire East. More locally, on the south side of Greater Manchester, there are daily commuting movements into Cheshire East, especially to the high technology and pharmaceutical industries in the north of the Borough. Added to this mix are movements associated with the Airport which are set to increase following the implementation of planned developments.

3.91 Previous regional plans have placed a high priority on urban regeneration in Greater Manchester with a particular focus on housing in the City Centre and nearby inner city areas, as well as the areas

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29   2001 Census, ONS. Crown Copyright. Note: At the time of writing, Census 2011 data were not yet available for commuting flows to and from individual Local Authorities.

that are suffering the most from de-population and derelict land in the north and east of the city. This policy focus has been replicated in the Core Strategies of the relevant local authorities and inevitably (due to the inherent lack of greenfield sites) is heavily dependent on the redevelopment of previously developed land. Not surprisingly, the delivery of this policy approach was hit by the post-2007 recession, but in the immediately preceding years was remarkably successful. The latest draft of the Greater Manchester Strategy considers a move away from the previous policy approach and seeks to review the land supply to support growth in those locations most attractive to the market. This recognises that failure to provide appropriate sites in areas where the market wants to invest, both in housing and employment uses, risks Greater Manchester losing development and investment to other areas.

Cheshire West and Chester

3.92   The Borough of Cheshire West and Chester was created in 2009 at the same time as Cheshire East and is an area of wide contrasts. The generally affluent historic city of Chester is sub-regionally important for its retail and visitor attractions. There are also numerous smaller towns that grew significantly through industrial activity and each has pockets of deprivation, including Northwich and Winsford. Both these towns developed from the on-going salt extraction industry and relate quite closely to Cheshire East, especially Middlewich, in terms of access to local jobs and services.

3.93   The emerging Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One) aims to regenerate and improve Northwich and Winsford and recognises the inter dependence of these towns with Middlewich that is encompassed by joint working through the Weaver Valley Partnership Board. The emerging Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan also identifies an opportunity for housing development adjacent to Middlewich on land within Cheshire West. However, it is presently considered that this site is not required to meet Cheshire West and Chester's development needs. If such land is to be developed in the future, then road improvements around the north of Middlewich (in Cheshire West) are likely to be required.

3.94   It is recognised that there are cross boundary movements of waste in both directions between Cheshire West and Chester and its neighbouring areas. The emerging Local Plan will identify sufficient land to meet Cheshire West and Chester's predicted waste management requirements and safeguard consented waste management facilities including Kinderton Lodge near Middlewich. Mineral resources of sand, gravel, salt and brine are extracted in Cheshire West and Chester and the emerging Local Plan seeks to provide a continued supply of these, contributing to sub-national (regional) supply guidelines.

Warrington

3.95   In 1968, Warrington was designated as a New Town, primarily to take economic advantage of its unique position at the hub of the region's transportation network, evidently aided by the arrival of the region's motorways. Warrington has evolved from being a medium-sized industrial town to the home of major national and international companies.

3.96   The emerging Warrington Core Strategy highlights that since the end of the New Town era, strategic planning policies have sought to arrest outward growth of the town. This is partly through recognition that Warrington is nearing its natural limits of expansion and partly acknowledging that the New Town development had remarkably little effect on the older urban areas of inner Warrington. Recent efforts to date have therefore focused on regenerating and 'restructuring' the older core of the town. The Warrington Core Strategy intends to continue with this approach and to help to create a strong identity for the town.

Spatial Portrait

3.97   Warrington attracts commuters from a wide area due to its high concentration of businesses and good transport connectivity. However, the main flow involving Cheshire East is that of Warrington residents travelling to work in Knutsford. **(30)**

Peak District, High Peak and Staffordshire Moorlands

3.98   The Peak District National Park covers parts of Derbyshire and Staffordshire as well as the north eastern extremity of Cheshire East Borough. The National Park has its own planning authority and development plans. The Peak District National Park is also a key tourism brand for Cheshire East. The designation of the National Park excludes the main settlements in High Peak Borough. The furthest north is Glossop which looks mainly towards Greater Manchester. New Mills and Whaley Bridge are adjacent to the north east boundary of Cheshire East and do have linkages to Cheshire East, particularly the Macclesfield area. They are also served by the A6, as is Chapel-en-le-Frith, and will benefit from transport improvements identified by the A6 Corridor Study. Further south is the spa town of Buxton which is a visitor attraction in its own right and one that is located close to Cheshire East for day trips. The emerging High Peak Local Plan seeks to establish and consolidate Buxton as England's leading spa town. The proximity of the National Park is an important consideration for the location of future development in both High Peak and Cheshire East as the landscape is an important tourist attraction which helps the economy of both areas. Increased levels of development in the northern parts of Cheshire East will serve to reduce pressure for growth in the High Peak area, helping to limit potential increases in the use of the A6 particularly in the Disley area and impact on the setting of the National Park.

3.99   The National Park is a complex tapestry of different landscapes but there are three distinct areas: the less populated upland moorland areas and their fringes (the Dark Peak and Moorland Fringes); the most populated lower-lying limestone grasslands and limestone dales and the Derwent and Hope Valleys (the White Peak and Derwent Valley); and the sparsely populated mixed moorland and grassland landscapes of the south west (the South West Peak).

3.100   The National Park Authority identifies challenges that broadly fall into seven closely related themes:

- Landscapes and conservation
- Recreation and tourism
- Climate change and sustainable building
- Homes, shops and community facilities
- Supporting economic development
- Minerals
- Accessibility, travel and traffic

3.101   In essence, the Park Authority is seeking to meet the everyday needs of local residents, as well as catering for visitors, controlling mineral extraction and balancing all this with the task of protecting the attractive landscape of the area.

3.102   The designation of the National Park excludes the main settlements in High Peak Borough. New Mills, the largest town, and Whaley Bridge are adjacent to the north east boundary of Cheshire East. These towns mainly look to Greater Manchester but will benefit from the proposed SEMMMS road improvements. Further south is the spa town of Buxton which is a visitor attraction in its own right and one that is located close to Cheshire East for day trips. The emerging High Peak Local Plan seeks to establish and consolidate Buxton as England's leading spa town.

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30   2001 Census, ONS. Crown Copyright. Note: At the time of writing, Census 2011 data were not yet available for commuting flows to and from individual Local Authorities.

3.103 Staffordshire Moorlands District is partially within the National Park but the area to the south west that borders Cheshire East is outside the Peak District and is characterised by an orientation mainly towards Stoke-on-Trent. The former mining town of Biddulph is the main settlement bordering Cheshire East. The nearby Cheshire East towns provide a counter attraction for Biddulph residents in terms of shops and services. The emerging Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy seeks to strengthen and consolidate Biddulph town centre.

Shropshire

3.104 Shropshire is a largely rural area. The Shropshire Core Strategy identifies the need for the county's market towns and rural settlements to become more sustainable places that are resilient to meet the challenges of the 21st century. The Core Strategy identifies five spatial zones reflecting the individual distinctiveness of different parts of Shropshire, the North East Zone borders Cheshire East. Within this zone, Whitchurch is the nearest key settlement to Cheshire East with which it is well connected by road and rail (it is on the Crewe to Cardiff line). Whitchurch has a range of services including a community hospital and numerous local employers. There is a modest level of two way commuting between Whitchurch and Nantwich / Crewe (and on to Manchester) and Shropshire Council's strategy for Whitchurch provides significant levels of new employment land, including a new business park to the south of the town, partly as an attempt to reverse this situation.

4
The Case for Growth

4 The Case for Growth

4.1   The Government has stated that *'Britain has lost ground in the world's economy, and needs to catch up. If we do not act now, jobs will be lost, our country will become poorer and we will find it difficult to afford the public services we all want. If we do not wake up to the world around us, our standard of living will fall, not rise'*[31].

4.2   Cheshire East is at the heart of the largest single economic area outside of the capital with long established linkages to the Manchester and Liverpool City Regions, North Staffordshire and North Wales. Its connectivity and closeness to Manchester and Liverpool airports and its integral relationship to the motorway network and West Coast Mainline makes the Borough uniquely positioned to deliver sustainable economic growth.

4.3   The top priority for Cheshire East Council is to increase the Borough's economic and social wellbeing in a way that is cohesive and sustainable. The Local Plan Strategy is therefore vital in driving and supporting the development of jobs in the Borough and the infrastructure and housing that is needed to support that employment. Through the Local Plan, Cheshire East has to make sure that there is sufficient land allocated for business, retail, leisure and other commercial developments to ensure that jobs led growth is delivered.

The Case for Growth

Growth in Cheshire East is both necessary and beneficial for the following reasons:

- To accord with the Government's growth agenda and national planning policy
- To help achieve the ambition of the Local Enterprise Partnership for Cheshire and Warrington to be the best performing regional economy outside of the South East
- To build upon the economic success of Cheshire East and attract more inward investment
- To provide more diverse employment including well paid highly skilled jobs
- To generate greater expenditure in local shops and services so spreading improved prosperity to many local people
- To provide a range of new homes including much needed affordable housing
- To retain young people and attract suitably qualified employees to live and work locally, limiting travel congestion
- To provide more opportunities for skills and personal development
- To help deliver much needed local regeneration schemes
- To provide improved physical infrastructure and other services that are accessible to all
- To provide improvements to the built and natural environment
- To promote a thriving rural economy and tourism industry

4.4   The Government has invited Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP) to produce Strategic Economic Plans (SEPs) for their areas as the basis of funding negotiations to drive economic growth. The emerging Cheshire and Warrington SEP includes a number of transformational projects in Cheshire East including High Growth City focusing on linking Crewe and Macclesfield by way of Congleton creating a 'corridor of opportunity'. The sustainable growth aspirations set out in the Local Plan Strategy are a key element in meeting the ambition of a LEP and fulfilling Cheshire East's sub-regional role.

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31   Source: The Plan for Growth, Department for Business Innovation and Skills, March 2011

4.5   The economy of Cheshire East already makes an impressive contribution to the Gross Value Added figures in the sub-region. The Gross Value Added (GVA) figure for Cheshire and Warrington is around £21.9 billion [32] with the sub-region employing an estimated 444,100 people (as of 2012). [33]Cheshire East already makes an impressive contribution to the sub-regional and regional economies: its GVA is around £9.2bn (2012 estimate), which equates to 7.0% of the North West region's economic output. As of 2012, an estimated 173,500 people were working in Cheshire East, as either employees or working proprietors. [34]The overall ambition of the Local Plan Strategy is to further strengthen the Borough's economy.

4.6   Cheshire East performs better than the regional and UK averages in skill levels, business start ups and knowledge-based employment. The Borough has major educational assets, in terms of skills development and knowledge transfer, in the form of Manchester Metropolitan University at Crewe and three Further Education colleges - South Cheshire, Reaseheath and Macclesfield. The Council also has aspirations for a University Technical College in Crewe. The Local Plan Strategy is therefore growth orientated in order to retain and build upon Cheshire East's existing skills and knowledge base providing and building on the existing knowledge economy and high value jobs in the future.

4.7   The extent to which a location provides access to markets and a skilled workforce will impact on attracting inward investment into an area. Individuals make decisions on where they wish to live taking into account the quality of housing and the environment. Consequently, the availability of good housing and a high quality environment influence decisions about business location, investment and growth. Increases in local expenditure on goods and services can also lead to further jobs being created in the Borough and overall increases local prosperity.

4.8   If we do not provide sufficient housing, commercial or employment opportunities, economic growth will be constrained because new businesses will decide not to locate in Cheshire East, whilst house prices will increase, exacerbating the affordability problem. In areas of high cost housing, employers have particular difficulty in recruiting to lower paid posts, restricting economic growth. The consequences may be significant in personal and environmental terms with lower paid workers being forced to live in areas of cheaper housing outside Cheshire East but travelling long distances into the Borough to work.

4.9   Furthermore, there are clear demographic challenges in the Borough, with a declining proportion of working age population. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update (2013) identifies that managing demographic change will become an increasingly important issue with the population in Cheshire East of pensionable age and above continuing to grow, from 83,521 in 2010 to 124,544 by 2030. In order to support these demographic changes, growth is required in order to attract inward investment, to retain people of working age in the Borough and attract new people of working age to live in Cheshire East. This will in turn increase the amount of disposable income in the Borough to support local services, town centres and the vitality and vibrancy of local communities.

4.10   An adequate supply of a range of housing plays a fundamental role in building a successful economy. Despite the recent economic recession, our evidence shows that need for housing over the next 20 years is likely to outstrip supply unless we increase the amount of new housing provided through the Local Plan Strategy, in particular housing that meets local needs and is affordable to people who should live or work in the Borough.

4.11   Housing development also makes an important contribution to the local economy in its own right. It creates employment and skills development opportunities for construction workers and also generates increased retail expenditure in the local community. The Centre for Economics and Business

32   Regional GVA (Income Approach) NUTS3 Tables, Office for National Statistics (ONS), Dec 2013. Commentary based on data for 2012.
33   Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) 2012, ONS, NOMIS. Crown Copyright.
34   Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) 2012, ONS, NOMIS. Crown Copyright.

The Case for Growth

Research has estimated that if new housebuilding across the UK were to rise to 300,000 annually by 2015 (95,000 new houses were built in 2010), it would add some 201,000 extra permanent jobs in construction and contribute £75 billion to the UK's Gross Domestic Product.

4.12   The NPPF (March 2012) states that the planning system should: *'proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, businesses and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs. Every effort should be made objectively to identify and then meet the housing, business and other development needs of an area, and respond positively to wider opportunities for growth. Plans should take account of market signals, such as land prices and housing affordability, and set out a clear strategy for allocating sufficient land which is suitable for development in their area, taking into account the needs of the residential and business communities'.*

4.13   The Local Plan Strategy seeks to enable growth through providing a range of sustainably located development sites that are attractive to economic investment. The Local Plan Strategy also brings forward at an early stage the necessary infrastructure that services new sites and facilitates more efficient use of existing commercial premises. It also sets out how the Council will use its own land and financial resources to deliver sustainable economic growth in the Borough. Policies in the Local Plan Strategy will safeguard existing businesses and encourage inward investment into the Borough supporting the promotion of the Borough as a place to do business.

4.14   A strong economy offering sustainable growth is essential in maintaining the Borough's prosperity in a fast changing world. However, it is important that economic growth achieves the other elements of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF.

4.15   The Local Plan Strategy, as the spatial expression of the Borough Council's Sustainable Community Strategy, will deliver on a number of key priorities for action including creating the conditions for business growth, unlocking the potential of towns in particular Crewe and Macclesfield, supporting young people whilst preparing for an increasingly older population and ensuring a sustainable future by providing appropriate housing, employment land, infrastructure and community facilities to meet future needs. The Local Plan Strategy will also deliver a number of the outcomes set by the Council's Three Year Plan (2013 to 2016) including promoting local communities as strong and supportive, providing a strong and resilient economy, promoting a green and sustainable place and a good place to live and work.

4.16   The Council's objective is not economic growth at any price; rather it is the sustainable development of Cheshire East. Sustainable development concerns the effective balance of economic, social and environmental factors; in many ways these factors are intertwined as the attractive environment of the Borough is key to its economic success. If the attractive environment were to be degraded there would be both social and economic repercussions.

4.17   Accordingly, the aspiration of the Local Plan Strategy is to secure future economic prosperity but to do so in harmony with the existing characteristics and strengths of the Borough wherever possible. On occasion, however, the implication of growth is that new policies and proposals are required in response. The Local Plan Strategy contains bold proposals for new communities in locations across Cheshire East as a better means of meeting future development needs. Equally, revisions to the Green Belt are necessary for towns such as Macclesfield to maintain their role and status – a departure from past policies of development constraint at any cost.

4.18   The NPPF requires that plans be aspirational but realistic; furthermore they should address the spatial implications of changes on economy, society and the environment. Whilst the policies of the plan will inevitably be time limited, the proposals within it, for new development and infrastructure will endure for much longer. In many ways, the developments planned now will only mature in the 2030s or 2040s. Planning ahead over a 30 to 40 year time horizon is seldom easy; indeed some would question whether the conventional model of economic growth that underpins much of the plan

will remain valid by the middle of the 21st Century. Some might even suggest that the continuing rise of world population combined with advancing climate change point to an altogether more challenging future in which competition for diminishing food, water and fuel resources predominates.

4.19 Sustainable development is therefore the best preparation for a future whose defining characteristic is uncertainty. The Local Plan Strategy unashamedly promotes economic development – but does so in a way that builds upon existing strengths wherever possible. New development will be necessary, but environmental assets will be protected wherever possible.

4.20 Therefore the plan seeks to consolidate on what is best about the Borough – but this is not a plan for standing still – it is forward thinking, determined to plan effectively for future needs, and dedicated to providing new and innovative solutions where appropriate.

The Case for Growth

5
Vision

5 Vision

5.1 Economic prosperity is fundamental to a healthy and sustainable Borough. In order to pursue wider community goals of providing good quality and affordable housing, building a better, more sustainable transport system, providing improved community facilities, improving educational attainment and investing in our vibrant town centres, a strong economy is absolutely vital.

5.2 It is also recognised that the Borough's outstanding environment, including its attractive countryside, its vibrant market towns and villages and its many heritage assets, is highly valued by residents and also plays an important part in attracting inward investment.

5.3 With these principles in mind, the Local Plan Strategy sets out how a stronger economy and sufficient housing of the right type to meet our future needs will be delivered in a way that is appropriate environmentally and socially.

5.4 To accommodate the needed growth in jobs and houses, new development is necessary. The Local Plan Strategy will make sure that development takes place in areas that are well connected to existing urban areas, that incorporates green infrastructure and the latest building technology, generates a minimal carbon footprint, promotes waste recycling and enables healthy living.

5.5 The pursuit of sustainability in Cheshire East does not mean stopping urban change or employment growth; it means growing at a sensible pace, with as low as practical environmental impact and reduced waste, in a community that is economically robust, which can deliver the services and infrastructure that residents need, and that promotes the well-being of all of its citizens.

5.6 The Local Plan Strategy is one of jobs led growth, focusing particularly on the two Principal Towns of Crewe and Macclesfield, and the larger towns that form Key Service Centres. Growth, however, should not be at the expense of the attractive environment that is, of course, a key asset in drawing investment to the Borough. Good quality, well designed, sustainable development is therefore at the heart of the Local Plan Strategy and vision for the Borough.

Figure 5.1 Development in Cheshire East: Sainsbury's Nantwich; Honda Garage, Crewe; Parkside Hospital, Macclesfield; and Housing in Handforth

Vision for Cheshire East in 2030

In 2030 and beyond, Cheshire East will be an economically prosperous area, with a well educated and skilled labour force benefiting from a strong and diverse employment base and high employment levels. It will continue to benefit from its strategic location close to the Greater Manchester and Potteries conurbations and adjoining the Peak District National Park, with excellent road and rail links to the rest of the country. Based on its landscape and heritage assets and historic market towns, the importance of the area as a visitor and tourism destination will have increased.

Cheshire East will continue to be a desirable place to live, with a beautiful, bio-diverse and productive countryside and unique towns and villages, each with their own identity and character influenced by such factors as the silk industry, salt extraction, our agricultural heritage and associated historic markets, the growth of the railways and many other factors that result in a wealth of history and culture.

Well designed new employment and housing development will have been developed to meet local needs in locations that reduce the need to travel. The infrastructure to support this growth will have been delivered in partnership with other organisations, whilst maximising and enhancing those built and natural features most valued across the Borough. In the main, new development will have been directed to the Principal Towns of Crewe and Macclesfield to support regeneration priorities, and to the Key Service Centres of the Borough which provide a good range of services and facilities. In addition, a new Sustainable Village will have been created in the north of the Borough, which will provide a new economic focus, benefiting from its closeness to Manchester Airport and Greater Manchester. This development will help meet housing needs for the Borough and provide a range of community infrastructure in a well designed, sustainable and green environment.

Stronger and safer communities will have been created with a high quality of life, good access to education, jobs, services, shops and public transport and an appropriate range of housing to meet its needs, including those of an ageing population. People will lead healthy and active lifestyles benefiting from improved access to sporting facilities, high quality open spaces, play areas, allotments and the open countryside. A Green Infrastructure network will have been created, increasing the provision of accessible green spaces, supporting flora, fauna and improving general wellbeing.

Cheshire East will have made a significant contribution to reducing carbon emissions and tackling climate change through the high energy efficiency of new and existing buildings; generation of renewable energy; and sustainable patterns of development that enable a high proportion of people to travel by public transport, cycle or on foot. Extensively available fast telecommunications links will have enabled business users to efficiently work wherever they are located.

The supply of important natural mineral resources such as silica sand and salt will be achieved in the most sustainable way possible. Waste will be reduced and managed sustainably; being utilised as a resource wherever possible.

Our many areas of landscape value, sites of nature conservation importance, characteristic waterways and heritage assets will have been protected from development, and enhanced where possible, through environmental and heritage designations placed on specific assets including valued Green Belt.

Vision

6
Strategic Priorities

6 Strategic Priorities

6.1 In order to deliver our vision, the Council has set out the following strategic priorities:

- Promoting economic prosperity by creating conditions for business growth.
- Creating sustainable communities, where all members are able to contribute and where all the infrastructure required to support the community is provided.
- Protecting and enhancing environmental quality of the built and natural environment.
- Reducing the need to travel, managing car use and promoting more sustainable modes of transport and improving the road network.

6.2 Further details on how the Council will deliver these priorities are set out below. They will be used to frame our strategic policies and measure the performance of the Local Plan Strategy.

6.3 Cheshire East will be an engine for growth and will promote a dynamic, prosperous economy. We have a wide variety of successful industries in the area including the advanced engineering industry which includes Bentley Motors and the pharmaceutical industry including AstraZeneca, but we need to be proactive, by ensuring that we exploit new opportunities, build on our current successes and create a climate that is attractive for business investment and growth, not just in our larger towns but also in our smaller towns and rural communities. We want to create thriving town and village centres that are sustainable and that continue to deliver essential services, infrastructure, retail, leisure and employment opportunities.

6.4 To achieve these ambitions, there is a need to create the conditions required for jobs led growth including the need to create the right business environment.

Strategic Priority 1

Promoting economic prosperity by creating conditions for business growth

This will be delivered by:

1. Providing a viable and flexible supply of quality employment land and premises, including business parks and strategic sites, to attract new and innovative businesses, to enable existing businesses to grow, to bring empty plots into economic use and to create new and retain existing jobs.
2. Promoting the vitality, viability and accessibility of our town centres to create thriving destinations for retail, culture and leisure to satisfy a growing population and attract visitors from further afield.
3. Supporting major regeneration schemes in the town centres of Crewe and Macclesfield in order to provide an enhanced retail and leisure offer and improved environmental quality.
4. Improving the economy in rural areas by supporting the development of rural enterprise, diversification of the rural economy, sustainable tourism, mineral working, broadband connectivity, and the continued importance of farming and agriculture.
5. Capitalising on the accessibility of the Borough, including improved transport links with the Manchester City Region and Manchester Airport, improved transport infrastructure such as Crewe Railway Station; and maximising the opportunities that may be offered by High Speed 2 Rail Links (HS2).
6. Securing excellent educational facilities to meet the needs of the current and future population of all ages, to improve educational attainment and provide a wide skills base.

7. Supporting flexible working and investment in new communication technologies, to allow home working and to support businesses reliant on e-technology.
8. Supporting high quality design.

6.5   Cheshire East is committed to meeting the needs of its local communities and providing the infrastructure, services and facilities required to create sustainable and stronger communities, whilst recognising that Cheshire East covers a large geographical area and contains a large number of towns and villages, each with its own local character and distinctiveness.

Strategic Priority 2

Creating sustainable communities, where all members are able to contribute and where all the infrastructure required to support the community is provided

This will be delivered by:

1. Providing for the full objectively assessed housing needs for the Borough to support economic growth and to meet housing needs:

    i.   Ensuring that a substantial majority of new housing is provided in sustainable locations such as Crewe, Macclesfield and the Key Service Centres;
    ii. Ensuring that there is an appropriate mix of house types, sizes and tenures including affordable housing to meet the Borough's needs;
    iii. Enabling vulnerable and older people to live independently, longer.

2. Ensuring that development provides the opportunity for healthier lifestyles through provision of high quality green infrastructure and cultural, recreational, leisure and sports opportunities.
3. Working with infrastructure providers to make sure that infrastructure to support the community is provided; this will include local health and social care facilities, indoor and outdoor leisure and recreation facilities, greenspaces, education, transport, superfast broadband, mobile and other ICT connectivity, water, waste and energy.
4. Improving links between existing and new neighbourhoods by giving priority to walking, cycling and public transport and providing a genuine choice of transport modes and supporting community integration.
5. Ensuring that all new development is well designed, sustainable and energy efficient.

Strategic Priorities

6.6 The environment of Cheshire East is unusually rich and varied and its high quality natural and man-made heritage is a key asset, attractive to both residents and visitors. The Local Plan Strategy will maintain and enhance the assets that make a fundamental contribution to the quality of life in Cheshire East. Development will also provide the opportunity to enhance and contribute to the quality of the environment.

Strategic Priority 3

Protecting and enhancing environmental quality

This will be delivered by:

1. Respecting the character and distinctiveness of places, buildings and landscapes through the careful design and siting of development.
2. Maintaining and enhancing the character and separate identities of the Borough's towns and villages.
3. Reducing the Borough's impact on climate change by:

   i. sustainable patterns of development;
   ii. prudently managing natural resources;
   iii. promoting renewable energy;
   iv. encouraging water efficiency;
   v. using energy efficiently; and
   vi. avoiding developing land that may be at risk from the effects of climate change.

4. Addressing the local causes of water, air, light, noise and all other forms of pollution and the contamination of land, reducing the impact on local communities and meeting the requirements of the Water Framework Directive;
5. Conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment ensuring appropriate protection is given to designated and non-designated assets, including their wider settings.
6. Providing new and maintaining existing high quality and accessible green infrastructure to create networks of greenspace for people, flora and fauna and allow species adaptation and migration.
7. Establishing clearly defined Green Belt boundaries that take into account the need to promote sustainable patterns of development and include "safeguarded land" which can meet the longer term development needs of the borough stretching beyond the plan period.
8. Providing a supply of mineral resources including suitable alternatives in the most sustainable way possible without unacceptable environmental costs.
9. Managing waste in the most sustainable and environmentally sensitive way possible through its prevention and utilisation as a resource, driving it up the waste hierarchy.

Strategic Priorities

6.7 Good transport links are crucial for a successful economy, thriving towns and rural areas and a good quality of life for all our residents. We want to make sure that our transport system enables people to get to the places they want to, when they want to; that people can walk and cycle as a real alternative to the car and that our transport system is integrated across all modes of transport.

Strategic Priority 4

Reducing the need to travel, managing car use and promoting more sustainable modes of transport and improving the road network

This will be delivered by:

1. Building homes that are close, or easily accessible, to where people work, shop, access services and enjoy recreational activities.
2. Ensuring development gives priority to walking, cycling and public transport in its design.
3. Supporting safe and secure access for mobility and visually impaired people.
4. Encouraging travel by sustainable means in order to reduce congestion.
5. Developing improved transport and infrastructure networks.
6. Enhancing the role of key railway stations. Enhancing the role of Crewe as a national rail hub.
7. Promoting and investing in passenger transport services and infrastructure.
8. Providing additional transport infrastructure to improve connectivity.

Strategic Priorities

7

Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

7 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

7.1   The World Commission on Environment and Development defined sustainable development as *'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability for future generations to meet their own needs'* (Bruntland Commission, 1987). The concept of sustainable development acknowledges that we must develop both economically and socially, but in a way that is in accordance with a whole range of environmental concerns including nature conservation, energy efficiency, conserving future resources, purity of air, earth and water, archaeology, agricultural land, landscape and countryside protection.

7.2   The NPPF foreword states that *'the purpose of planning is to help achieve sustainable development. **Sustainable** means ensuring that better lives for ourselves don't mean worse lives for future generations. **Development** means growth . . . So sustainable development is about positive growth - making economic, environmental and social progress for this and future generations'*.

7.3   There are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. The NPPF clarifies that these roles should not be undertaken in isolation, because they are mutually dependent. Therefore, to achieve sustainable development, economic, social and environmental gains should be sought jointly and simultaneously through the planning system.

7.4   The Framework goes on to confirm that there should be a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which all plans should be based upon and reflect this presumption with clear policies to guide how the presumption will be applied locally.

7.5   The Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy is a positive, pro-growth strategy that seeks to deliver the amount of development required in the Borough up to 2030 in a sustainable way. The Local Plan Strategy is consistent and in general conformity with the NPPF. For the avoidance of doubt this is set out in the following overarching, all embracing policy on the achievement of sustainable development:

Policy MP 1

Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

1.   When considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. It will always work proactively with applicants to find joint solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.
2.   Planning applications that accord with the policies in the Development Plan (and, where relevant, with policies in Neighbourhood Plans) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
3.   Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision, the Council will grant permission, unless material considerations indicate otherwise, taking into account whether:

    i.   Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or
    ii.   Specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted.

Justification

7.6   The National Planning Policy Framework contains a Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development. This presumption is considered to be the golden thread running through both plan making and decision taking. The Local Plan Strategy is the principal planning policy document for the Cheshire East Local Plan (the Development Plan) and therefore reflects the National Planning Policy Framework in making clear that development which is considered sustainable will be approved without delay.

7.7   Policy MP 1 makes sure that the Local Plan Strategy is based upon the Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development, as required by the National Planning Policy Framework. The policies in the Local Plan Strategy provide clear guidance on how the Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development will be applied locally.

7.8   The Local Plan Strategy policies will be supplemented by the Saved Local Plan Policies (in accordance with their consistency with the National Planning Policy Framework) until they are replaced by policies in the Site Allocations and Development Policies document and the Waste Development Plan Document. Should Neighbourhood Plans be produced in the Borough (in conformity with the contents of the Local Plan Strategy) then their policies will also be relevant.

7.9   Further policies setting out how sustainable development principles will be applied in Cheshire East are included in Chapter 9 'Planning for Sustainable Development'.

Key Evidence

1.   National Planning Policy Framework

8
Planning for Growth

8 Planning for Growth

8.1   One of the core principles of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is that planning should *'proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs. Every effort should be made objectively to identify and then meet the housing, business and other development needs of an area, and respond positively to wider opportunities for growth. Plans should take account of market signals, such as land prices and housing affordability, and set out a clear strategy for allocating sufficient land which is suitable for development in their area, taking account of the needs of the residential and business communities'.*

8.2   The NPPF also states that Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs unless there would be significant adverse impacts or where the NPPF indicates development should be restricted. Key evidence of need in relation to the economy includes the Employment Land Review and local business surveys, whilst key evidence to assess housing needs has come from the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2010 and 2013 update, the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) 2010 and population forecasts.

Policy PG 1

Overall Development Strategy

1.   Provision will be made for a minimum of 300 hectares of land for business, general industrial and storage and distribution uses over the period 2010 to 2030, to support growth of the local economy.

2.   Sufficient land will be provided to accommodate the full, objectively assessed needs for the Borough of at least 27,000 homes between 2010 and 2030. This will be delivered as follows:

   - 2010/11[35] to 2014/15 – an average of 1,200 homes each year (6,000 in total);
   - 2015/16 to 2019/20 – an average of 1,300 homes each year (6,500 in total);
   - 2020/21 to 2024/25 – an average of 1,400 homes each year (7,000 in total);
   - 2025/26 to 2029/30 – an average of 1,500 homes each year (7,500 in total)

3.   In addition to meeting the full, objectively assessed needs of Cheshire East, provision will be made for up to 500 homes to assist with meeting the housing needs of High Peak Borough during the period 2020 to 2030. There will be delivered as follows:

   - 2020/21 to 2029/30 - an average of 50 homes each year (500 in total)

Justification

Jobs

8.3   The Cheshire East Employment Land Review (2012) highlights that Cheshire East is a key economic driver for the North West. The local economy provides 6.6% of the North West's economic output[36] and contains 7.6% of its businesses[37], the highest proportion of any unitary district in the North West.

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35   Phasing information relates to financial years (1st April - 31st March)
36   Regional GVA NUTS3 data 2011, ONS
37   Business Demography 2011: Enterprise Births, Deaths and Survivals, ONS

8.4 The Employment Land Review is the primary source of evidence related to the requirements for employment land. It uses a variety of methods to forecast the requirements for new employment land between 2009 and 2030. It considers the annual average rates of take-up of employment land over the past 25 years, as well as forecasting future demand for employment land using econometric data and population forecasts. It also looks at the annual average amount of employment land lost to other uses over the past 15 years.

8.5 Using all the available information, and in accordance with the 2004 ODPM Guidance Note on Employment Land Reviews, the study gives a range for the amount of employment land that will be required between 2009 and 2030. This range is between 278 hectares and 324 hectares, which includes a flexibility factor of 30% to reflect Cheshire East's aspirations for employment-led growth. This flexibility factor will allow the employment land supply to be flexible enough to deal with future economic changes, increases in employment land losses or increases in demand.

8.6 The overall provision set out in the Employment Land Review equates to an annual provision of between 13.2 hectares and 15.4 hectares. Extrapolating this across the 20 year plan period gives an overall requirement of between 265 hectares and 308 hectares between 2010 and 2030. The minimum provision of 300 hectares of employment land as set out on Policy PG1 is toward the upper end of this range which is an appropriate figure for a strategy based on jobs-led growth.

Employment Land Supply	Hectares
Completions 1st April 2010 to 31st March 2013	1.6
Employment Land Supply 1st April 2013[38]	115.5
Total Completions and Supply	117.1
Remaining (minimum)	182.9

Table 8.1 Employment Completions and Supply

8.7 Further information in relation to the completions and commitments is set out in Appendix A: 'Proposed Growth Distribution'.

Homes

8.8 As a minimum, the Plan aims to meet the full objectively assessed need for an additional 27,000 dwellings that is predicted to arise in Cheshire East over the 2010 – 2030 period. This need is based on forecasting work using the latest Government projections and also factors in the Council's aspirations for employment led growth, which seeks to deliver additional housing to enable a rate of jobs growth that averages 0.4% a year. Given that the aging population of the Borough is reducing the proportion of residents of working age, and the generally low local levels of unemployment, such an increase in jobs would create more in-commuting unless, as is intended, housing is provided at a level to match the employment growth. This level of employment growth – and the expansion in economic output that it is likely to bring – are considered realistically attainable, given the inherent potential of the Borough to attract economic investment. These rates of employment and economic output growth are also consistent with Cheshire East's previous (and strong) long-term economic performance. Such an approach also accords with the central tenant of the NPPF - the presumption in favour of enabling sustainable development.

8.9 The Council has used projections and forecasting as a basis for determining the objectively assessed need for housing. This links in with the draft National Planning Practice Guidance which makes it clear for the first time that:

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38 Employment sites that were in the employment land supply on this date but are now proposed for alternative uses in this Local Plan Strategy are not included in this figure

"Household projections published by the Department for Communities and Local Government should provide the starting point estimate of overall housing need"

8.10   The Guidance advocates that the latest household projections should be used to calculate overall housing need. The interim 2011-based subnational household projections are the most recent, but only look as far ahead as 2021. The published projections suggest the total number of households in Cheshire East is expected to increase annually by an average of around 1,050 over the ten year period i.e. from around 159,600 to 170,000. The Council has undertaken demographic forecasting work based on these interim projections, continuing them forward to 2030 using the same assumptions as the official projections and using the 2021 household formation rates from these official projections. This results in an average annual increase in dwellings of 1,180 over the whole Plan period. Further details of this scenario and others that have been modelled, including the justification for projecting forward the household formation rates, can be found in the Council's Population Projections and Forecasts background paper (February 2014).

8.11   The scenario that models an annual average jobs growth rate of 0.4% equates to a net average increase of 1,365 dwellings per annum or around 27,300 overall, a labour supply increase of around 17,300 people and an increase of around 14,800 jobs to 2030. This level of employment growth is likely to result in economic output (Gross Value Added, or GVA) expanding by an average of around 2.4% a year (because of the contribution that productivity growth makes to GVA growth). These employment and GVA growth rates are considered realistically attainable, given the inherent potential of the Borough to attract economic investment, and they are also consistent with Cheshire East's previous (and strong) long-term economic performance. For example, Office for National Statistics data suggest that, during the eleven years up to the start of the Plan period (i.e. 1999-2010), Cheshire East's GVA grew by an average of 2.0% a year in real (inflation-adjusted) terms [39] In this context, an economic output expansion of about 2.4% a year is ambitious, but achievable.

8.12   The above suggests that the medium growth strategy of providing around an additional 1,350 dwellings per annum, identified in the Council's Issues and Options Paper, would best match the expected future household growth in Cheshire East and the Council's economic growth aspirations.

8.13   The outputs from modelling work represent only one of the elements that have been considered by the Council in determining the level of housing growth shown in the Local Plan and considered appropriate for Cheshire East until 2030. The Council has also considered the findings of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), the pre-recession levels of house building and other wider policy considerations before determining what the appropriate housing requirement is for Cheshire East.

8.14   The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2010 and 2013 update confirms that Cheshire East is a high demand area, and that there is a need to maintain the delivery of a variety of dwelling types and sizes to reflect demand for a range of open market dwellings.

8.15   The SHMA 2013 update identifies that Cheshire East is an appropriate geography for planning purposes over which to assess and meet housing requirements. The study identifies that Cheshire East comprises several housing market areas that are substantially contained within the Borough. The functional market areas suggested by the data reflect the Crewe and Nantwich, Congleton and Macclesfield areas.

8.16   It also indicates that there is a net annual affordable housing need equivalent to an annual imbalance of 1,401 dwellings over its 5 year time horizon. It is important to state that this is a measure

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39   [1] Sources: [1] Regional GVA (Income Approach) NUTS3 Tables, Office for National Statistics (ONS), Dec 2013. [2] GVA at current prices and GVA chained volume measure data, Table 1.1, The Blue Book (UK National Accounts) – 2013 edition, ONS, 2013.

of the imbalance of affordable need relative to supply and is not a target for delivery of additional affordable homes.

8.17 Around 2,200 sites were considered as part of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (Update 31st March 2012). Of these approximately 1,600 sites were considered suitable for housing during the following 15 years. These 'suitable' sites could potentially provide a total of nearly 50,000 dwellings over the 15 year period, of which about 7,200 homes would be on brownfield sites with a further 4,800 on sites that are a mix of brownfield and greenfield land. This work demonstrates a theoretical capacity for new housing in the Borough. An updated Assessment will accompany the submission of this Plan to examination. In the meantime the Council has produced an updated 'Five Year Housing Land Supply Position Statement' with a base date of 31st December 2013. This has been produced for housing appeal purposes; it includes planning permissions granted up to that date but not the uncommitted sites included and proposed in this Plan. Nevertheless the research done for the Position Statement has been used to inform an interim housing trajectory for the Plan period which does include the envisaged delivery timing of all the sites proposed in the Plan. The trajectory is reproduced in Appendix E.

8.18 Using an overall housing need target of 27,000 dwellings for the Borough over the Plan period would equate to an average net increase of around 1,350 dwellings per annum. Setting this annual level to apply from 2010 would be a significant step change in the housing requirement for the area compared with past policy requirements. However this overall level of housing is considered necessary and appropriate to meet the Council and Government's growth agenda. In arriving at this total figure, consideration has been given to the capacity of the area to accommodate growth and an appropriate balance has been struck which minimises the impact on the environment, infrastructure and the Green Belt, whilst providing for objectively assessed needs. It is considered that a significantly higher growth strategy for housing, to facilitate even greater economic growth, would be unsustainable in overall terms as it would have an unacceptable impact on the local environment, the intended role of the Green Belt and the cumulative capacity of local infrastructure.

8.19 The overall basis of the Plan is to enable economic growth in Cheshire East. The local economy suffered, along with the rest of the country, during the recent recession. The annual rate of house building dipped to a low of less than 500 dwellings in 2010/11 compared to the annualised development plan target of 1,150 applicable at the time. This contraction in the house building industry is shown in starker terms if the new annualised average figure of 1,350 was to be applied immediately from 2010. Given the post-recession recovery needed by the house building industry, the historic Plan start date, the necessity to bring forward significant site-releasing infrastructure and the time required for the Plan's jobs led growth strategy to have effect, it is considered appropriate to have five year stepped up housing target figures. Such an approach should help avoid any diversion of development from the Potteries during the area's recovery from recession. The proposed first step target of 1,200 dwellings per annum for the 2010-15 period would still exceed the average annual increase in dwellings of 1,180 over the whole Plan period identified from the Government's projections, as detailed above,and represent an increase over the previous development plan. Successive 100 dwelling per annum step ups for the remaining three 5 year periods represent a realistic, ambitious and progressively increasing delivery of housing.

8.20 As part of considering options to removing land from the Green Belt, collaboration working with neighbouring authorities has explored the extent to which such authorities could assist in meeting the Cheshire East's housing requirements. The outcome of those discussions is that none of these authorities are in such a position. However a request to assist High Peak Council has been received. That authority's area is highly constrained by land of high landscape value and steep topography even within those parts of the Borough that are not within the Peak District National Park. Cheshire East Council wants to avoid inappropriate development pressure on the National Park, an important tourism destination that is partly within the authority's own area. The Council also recognises that previous housing restraint policies have probably directed some residential development to High

Peak. Associated with this are transport movements in the A6 corridor, which are causing severe traffic congestion that is likely to be further exacerbated by additional development. In view of these synergies between the two authorities' areas, it is considered appropriate to provide for part of High Peak's housing requirement in Cheshire East. A modest 500 dwellings in the second half of the Plan period is proposed, an amount considered to be within the parameters of the medium growth strategy.

Housing Land Supply		Net Dwellings
Net completions 01/04/10 - 31/03/11		466
Net completions 01/04/11 - 31/03/12		535
Net completions 01/04/12 - 31/03/13		652
Net completions 01/04/13 - 31/12/13[40]		497
Planning Permissions at 31st December 2013	Sites under construction	2,291
	Full planning permission	1,806
	Outline planning permission	2,509
	Subject to Section 106 Agreement	2,150
Total completions and planning permissions		10,906
Remaining (including 500 dwellings for High Peak)		16,594

Table 8.2 Housing Completions and Permissions

8.21   Further information in relation to the housing completions and commitments is set out in Appendix A: 'Proposed Growth Distribution'.

Settlement Hierarchy

8.22   It is important to make sure that the places where development takes place have good access to jobs, health and community services, education, shops, leisure, open space and sport and recreation facilities. If it is easy to walk, cycle or use public transport to get to facilities, the number and length of car journeys and carbon dioxide emissions (the primary cause of global climate change), can be reduced. For that reason, the bulk of new development should take place in Principal Towns and Key Service Centres where access to services is generally easier.

Principal Towns

8.23   The Principal Towns of Crewe and Macclesfield provide opportunities for employment, retail and education, and allow access to services. They serve a large catchment area with high levels of accessibility and public transport provision. The two towns have a distinct history, character and urban form, and both provide opportunities for sustainable future jobs led growth. The town centres of both Crewe and Macclesfield will be the main focus for high quality convenience and comparison retail, supported by a range of services, leisure, tourism, office and other town centre uses, including residential.

Crewe

8.24   The key objective for Crewe is to take advantage of its prime location for connectivity and significantly increase the amount and type of employment that is available in the town. Crewe and its surrounding area are situated in a unique location that is attractive to investors. The town is a

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40   Latest available data

strategic gateway to the North West, with excellent communication links to other parts of the country by road, rail and air (via Manchester Airport). Crewe also benefits from an advanced engineering / manufacturing skills base and its supply of available development land.

8.25 The All Change for Crewe and High Growth City regeneration initiative sets out ambitious plans for Crewe's growth, with the aim of making it a nationally significant economic centre by 2030.

Vision for Crewe

By 2030, as a gateway to the North West, Crewe will be a nationally significant economic centre; one of the leading advanced engineering and manufacturing centres in England; and a sought-after place to live and do business in Cheshire. Crewe will be recognised for its vibrant and diverse knowledge based economy; high quality communication and sustainable transport linkages; many physical development opportunities; attractive heritage, environmental and cultural assets that contribute to liveability; and its high quality image and perception generated through strong leadership.

Macclesfield

8.26 Macclesfield is the Borough's second largest town and the main town in the north of Cheshire East, with strong economic links to South Manchester.

8.27 An Economic Masterplan for the town was adopted by the Council in 2010 with the aim of sustaining the town's performance as one of the most successful in the regional economy. The Masterplan identified two key elements for the future success of the town. Firstly, the redevelopment of the town centre to provide a greater retail offer, and secondly, the delivery of the South Macclesfield Development Area providing opportunities for physical and economic development.

Vision for Macclesfield

By 2030, Macclesfield will continue to be a unique, distinctive and appealing destination set in a visible landscape setting, with a vital and vibrant town centre, where the community comes together to enjoy a wide range of facilities and events, along with its rich history and heritage assets. It will be a town where businesses thrive and where there is a good range of shopping and leisure activities both during the day and the evening. It will be a safe and desirable place with sustainable development, where people want to come to live, work and play. Our vision for employment sees Macclesfield as the centre of bio science manufacturing in Europe; this will be focused at the current AstraZeneca site in Hurdsfield.

Key Service Centres

8.28 Cheshire East is characterised by its distinctive historic towns each with their own history, character and charm. These towns lie at the heart of the Borough, and their vitality and growth is essential for the future prosperity of Cheshire East. These towns serve as Key Service Centres for a wider locality with a good range of facilities including shops, schools and cultural and leisure facilities.

8.29 The Key Service Centres of Alsager, Congleton, Handforth, Knutsford, Middlewich, Nantwich, Poynton, Sandbach and Wilmslow provide a range of services and opportunities for employment, retail and education. They serve a wide catchment area and contain public transport links. The Key Service Centres will deliver sustainable economic growth that can meet the aspirations of the Borough and local communities.

Planning for Growth

Local Service Centres

8.30   The Local Service Centres of Alderley Edge, Audlem, Bollington, Bunbury, Chelford, Disley, Goostrey, Haslington, Holmes Chapel, Mobberley, Prestbury, Shavington and Wrenbury provide a range of services and facilities that help meet the needs of local people, including those living in nearby settlements. Each has a primary school and, in the case of Holmes Chapel and Shavington, a secondary school: Alderley Edge has one private secondary school for girls. In many cases they also have a limited range of shops, health and leisure facilities, and employment opportunities. New development is required to meet local needs and help retain services and facilities so that residents can continue to enjoy these benefits and reduce the need to travel elsewhere. This may require small scale alterations to the Green Belt in some circumstances, which will be pursued as necessary through the Site Allocations and Development Policies Document.

Vision for Local Service Centres

In the Local Service Centres, some modest growth in housing and employment will have taken place to meet local objectively assessed needs, to reduce the level of out-commuting and to secure their continuing vitality. This may require small scale alterations to the Green Belt in some circumstances.

Other Settlements and Rural Areas

8.31   The remaining settlements have fewer facilities than the Local Service Centres, if any. As a result, people living in these communities generally have to travel to larger centres for jobs, schools, health care and other services. New development in these settlements will help to sustain these local services.

Vision for Other Settlements and Rural Areas

By 2030, some small scale residential and employment development will have taken place in these settlements, to help to retain and sustain local services and to reduce the need to travel.

The rural economy will have grown stronger and diversified, based primarily on agriculture but supplemented by appropriate small-scale tourism and visitor facilities in appropriate locations, food related businesses, recreation and other knowledge-based rural businesses, making use of ICT connectivity. At the same time, our many areas of landscape value, sites of nature conservation importance and heritage assets and their settings will have been maintained and enhanced.

Policy PG 2

Settlement Hierarchy

Principal Towns

In the Principal Towns of Crewe and Macclesfield, significant development will be encouraged to support their revitalisation, recognising their roles as the most important settlements in the Borough. Development will maximise the use of existing infrastructure and resources to allow jobs, homes and other facilities to be located close to each other and accessible by public transport.

Key Service Centres

In the Key Service Centres, development of a scale, location and nature that recognises and reinforces the distinctiveness of each individual town will be supported to maintain their vitality and viability.

The Key Service Centres are Alsager, Congleton, Handforth, Knutsford, Middlewich, Nantwich, Poynton, Sandbach and Wilmslow.

Local Service Centres

In the Local Service Centres, small scale development to meet localised objectively assessed needs and priorities will be supported where they contribute to the creation and maintenance of sustainable communities.

The Local Service Centres are Alderley Edge, Audlem, Bollington, Bunbury, Chelford, Disley, Goostrey, Haslington, Holmes Chapel, Mobberley, Prestbury, Shavington and Wrenbury.

Other Settlements and Rural Areas

In the interests of sustainable development, growth and investment in the other settlements should be confined to small scale infill and the change of use or conversion of existing buildings in order to sustain local services. Affordable housing development of an appropriate scale on the edge of a rural settlement to meet a particular local need may be justified, although local needs can also be met within larger settlements, dependent on location.

Justification

8.32   The Determining the Settlement Hierarchy paper considered existing settlements in Cheshire East and set out the structure and definition of the settlement hierarchy. This approach has been tested at various consultation stages in the development of the Local Plan Strategy.

8.33   Locating the majority of new development needs in, on the edge of, or close to the Borough's Principal Towns and Key Service Centres will enable the maximum use of existing infrastructure and resources and allow homes, jobs and other facilities to be located close to each other. This has the potential to reduce the amount of people reliant on travel by car and can support existing public transport modes. The Principal Towns and Key Service Centres also have the greatest potential to generate economic growth.

8.34   In the rural areas, the Local Plan Strategy approach is to support an appropriate level of small scale infill development that reflects the function and character of individual villages. Small scale

growth may be appropriate where it supports the creation of stronger local communities and where a clear local need is addressed as part of the Site Allocations and Development Policies Development Plan Document. Elsewhere, in order to reduce unsustainable sporadic development, new housing will be strictly controlled. In the case of Goostrey which adjoins Holmes Chapel, a larger Local Service Centre, it is anticipated that development needs will largely be provided for in Holmes Chapel.

8.35   Notwithstanding the above settlement hierarchy, the Local Plan Strategy also includes the new North Cheshire Growth Village at Handforth East. This new village will be designed to the highest environmental standards, acting as best practice examples for future design and construction. This new village will become a Local Service Centre in the settlement hierarchy once it is built and will embody sustainable development principles including:

- High quality amenities including shops, schools and sports facilities
- A network of green open spaces, parks and gardens
- Employment opportunities close at hand
- Renewable on-site energy production capable of supplying heat and power to every home where appropriate
- User-friendly public transport systems, encouraging people to use buses, cycles and walkways
- Efficient recycling and waste management

8.36   The National Planning Policy Framework states *'the supply of new homes can sometimes be best achieved through planning for larger scale development, such as new settlements or extensions to existing villages and towns that follow the principles of Garden Cities. Working with the support of their communities, local planning authorities should consider whether such opportunities provide the best way of achieving sustainable development. In doing so, they should consider whether it is appropriate to establish Green Belt around or adjoining any such new development'.*

8.37   The Local Plan Strategy also includes Other Local Plan Strategy Sites at Wardle Employment Improvement Area and Alderley Park Opportunity Site. At Alderley Park Opportunity Site an unidentified level of residential development may come forward where it is demonstrated to be necessary for the delivery of the life science park, in accordance with Local Plan Strategy Policy SC29.

Key Evidence

1.   Determining the Settlement Hierarchy

Green Belt and Safeguarded Land

8.38   The Council recognises the important role of the Green Belt in the Borough, particularly in preventing its towns and settlements from merging into one another, safeguarding the countryside and concentrating development into its urban areas. The National Planning Policy Framework states that '*the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and permanence*'.

8.39   Cheshire East has around 400 square kilometres of land designated as Green Belt, located in the northern and south-eastern parts of the Borough. These form part of the Green Belts surrounding Greater Manchester and the Potteries conurbations. Within the southern and eastern parts of the Borough, all of our major settlements are located beyond the outer edge of the Green Belt surrounding the Potteries. However, in the north of the Borough, the Green Belt surrounding Greater Manchester is much wider and a number of significant settlements are inset within the Green Belt. Historically, the Green Belt boundaries were drawn very tightly around these settlements, leaving little space for future development.

Planning for Growth

8.40 Draft proposals for Green Belt in the area were first drawn up in the 1960s to prevent the outward spread of development from Greater Manchester and the Potteries. Detailed boundaries for the North Cheshire Green Belt were defined through a series of Local Plans in the 1980s and detailed boundaries for the South Cheshire Green Belt were defined in the 1980s and early 1990s.

8.41 The general extent of the existing Green Belt will be maintained, but to achieve sustainable development over a period of several decades, some alterations to the detailed Green Belt boundaries around settlements in both the north and south of the Borough are necessary through this Local Plan Strategy.

8.42 In addition, a new area of Green Belt will be defined adjacent to Crewe to prevent it merging with Nantwich and other surrounding settlements.

Policy PG 3

Green Belt

Green Belt is a designation for land around large built-up areas, which aims to keep land permanently open or largely undeveloped.

1. The purposes of the Green Belt are to:

   i. check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas;
   ii. prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another;
   iii. safeguard the countryside from encroachment;
   iv. preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
   v. assist urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

2. Within the Green Belt, planning permission will not be granted for inappropriate development, except in very special circumstances, in accordance with national policy.

3. The construction of new buildings is inappropriate in Green Belt. Exceptions to this are

   i. buildings for agriculture and forestry;
   ii. provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation and for cemeteries, as long as it preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;
   iii. the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;
   iv. the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;
   v. limited infilling in villages, and limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the Local Plan; or
   vi. limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt and the purpose of including land within it than the existing development.

4. Certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate in Green Belt provided they preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land in Green Belt. These are:

   i. mineral extraction;

Planning for Growth

ii.   engineering operations;

iii.   local transport infrastructure that can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location;

iv.   the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction; and

v.   development brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order.

5.   The extent of the existing Green Belt[41] remains unchanged, apart from the removal of land at the following sites from the Green Belt (shown in Figure 8.1):

    i.   Site CS 9 'Land East of Fence Avenue, Macclesfield'
    ii.   Site CS 10 'Land off Congleton Road, Macclesfield'
    iii.   Site CS 11 'Gaw End Lane, Macclesfield'
    iv.   Site CS 15 'Radway Green Extension, Alsager'
    v.   Site CS 18 'North West Knutsford'
    vi.   Site CS 26 'Royal London, Wilmslow'
    vii. Site CS 27 'Wilmslow Business Park'
    viii. Site CS 30 'North Cheshire Growth Village, Handforth East'
    ix.   Site CS 31 (Safeguarded) 'Lyme Green, Macclesfield'
    x.   Site CS 32 (Safeguarded) 'South West Macclesfield'
    xi.   Site CS 33 (Safeguarded) 'North West Knutsford'
    xii. Site CS 34 (Safeguarded) 'North Cheshire Growth Village, Handforth East'
    xiii. Site CS 35 (Safeguarded) 'Prestbury Road, Wilmslow'
    xiv. Site CS 36 (Safeguarded) 'West of Upcast Lane, Wilmslow'
    xv. Existing Council Depot at Lyme Green
    xvi. Existing Car Showrooms, Manchester Road, Knutsford

6.   In addition to these areas listed for removal from the Green Belt, it may also be necessary to identify additional non-strategic sites to be removed in the Site Allocations and Development Policies Document.

7.   A new area of Green Belt will be designated adjacent to Crewe to prevent its merger with Nantwich and other surrounding settlements. It will also link to the existing Green Belt to help maintain the strategic openness of the gap between Crewe and the Potteries. The Area of Search for this new area of Green Belt is shown on Figure 8.2. The detailed boundaries of this new area of Green Belt will be defined through the Site Allocations and Development Policies Document[42].

8.   Green Belt boundaries will be identified on the Adopted Policies Map of the Local Plan.

Justification

Existing Green Belt

8.43   As set out in Chapter 4 'The Case for Growth' and Policy PG 1 'Overall Development Strategy', and evidenced through the Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update (2013) and the Employment Land Review (2012) there are significant identified needs for market and affordable housing, as well as for new employment land provision within Cheshire East.

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41   As defined in the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Local Plan, the Congleton Borough Local Plan and the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan

42   For clarification, the saved Green Gap policy from the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Local Plan will continue to operate (other than where specific sites are allocated in this Local Plan Strategy) until the detailed boundaries of the new Green Belt are defined in the Site Allocations and Development Policies Development Plan Document

8.44   The National Planning Policy Framework requires that '*Local planning authorities should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area*' and that '*Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs, with sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change, unless: (i) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; or (ii) specific policies in this Framework indicate development should be restricted*".

8.45   The National Planning Policy Framework also states '*Once established, Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of the Local Plan*'.

8.46   The Green Belt Assessment (2013) has considered the contribution each parcel of Green Belt land adjoining settlement boundaries makes to the purposes of the Green Belt. In the north of the Borough, there is very little scope to meet these needs from towns and villages inset within the Green Belt boundary, or from urban areas inside the Green Belt boundary. As set out in the Green Belt Assessment, a proportion of the proposed development arising from development needs within areas inset within the North Cheshire Green Belt is already channelled to locations within Cheshire East beyond the outer Green Belt boundary. Directing additional development to locations beyond the outer Green Belt boundary would lead to unsustainable patterns of development and would not provide sufficient new development in the areas of need.

8.47   The Green Belt has been a very successful instrument in limiting the expansion of urban areas and encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land. In addition, many of the settlements do not have a significant industrial legacy and are not blighted by large areas of derelict industrial land contributing to a potential supply of appropriately re-usable land for redevelopment. Consequently, there are not sufficient sites likely to be available to deliver enough market and affordable housing to meet anywhere near the identified housing needs and not enough opportunities for key additions to the employment sites portfolio.

8.48   Without alterations to the detailed Green Belt boundaries, the amount of new development that could be planned for in the north of the Borough would be very low. It is considered that such a low level of development would have severe consequences including:

- Demand for new housing outstripping supply, further increasing house prices and a lack of new affordable housing provision leading to young people and key workers being unable to stay in the area.
- An increasingly ageing population as young people leave and an absolute reduction in the number of people of working age.
- Difficulty in attracting inward investment and economic growth. In areas of relatively unaffordable housing, employers have difficulty in recruiting to lower paid positions.
- Increases in traffic and congestion as people unable to live close to their place of work are forced to travel longer distances for employment and the smaller working-age population living locally would also mean more people commuting in to the area.
- A decline in the vibrancy and vitality of town centres and some local services and facilities becoming unviable.

8.49   The importance of allocating land to go some way to meeting the identified development needs in the north of the Borough, combined with the consequences for sustainable development of not doing so, constitutes the exceptional circumstances required to justify alteration of the existing detailed Green Belt boundaries, whilst maintaining the overall general extent of the Green Belt.

8.50   In the south of the Borough, there is a particular need to allow an extension of the Radway Green employment area in the Green Belt. This is a particularly successful business site which has

diversified from its munitions origins, is short of available space land and is well located near to the M6 Motorway.
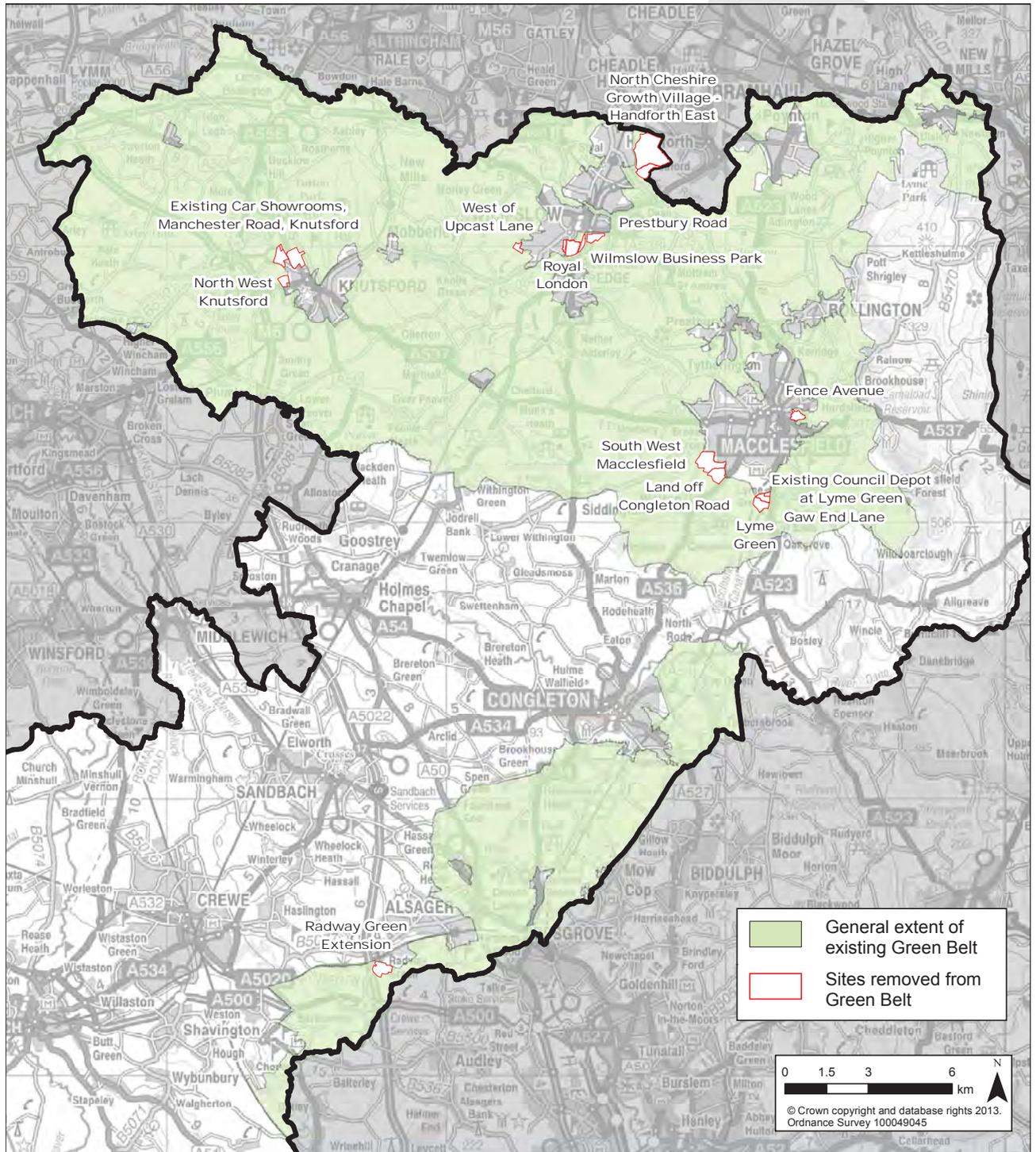
Figure 8.1 General Extent of the Existing Green Belt Showing Sites Proposed to be Removed

New Green Belt

8.51 Within the proposed area of search for a new Green Belt (shown in Figure 8.2), there are a number of neighbouring towns and villages fairly close to each other. As Crewe has grown throughout the 20th Century, erosion of the gaps between Crewe, Nantwich and a number of smaller settlements

has caused settlements to merge into the urban area in some cases, and very narrow gaps to remain in other cases.
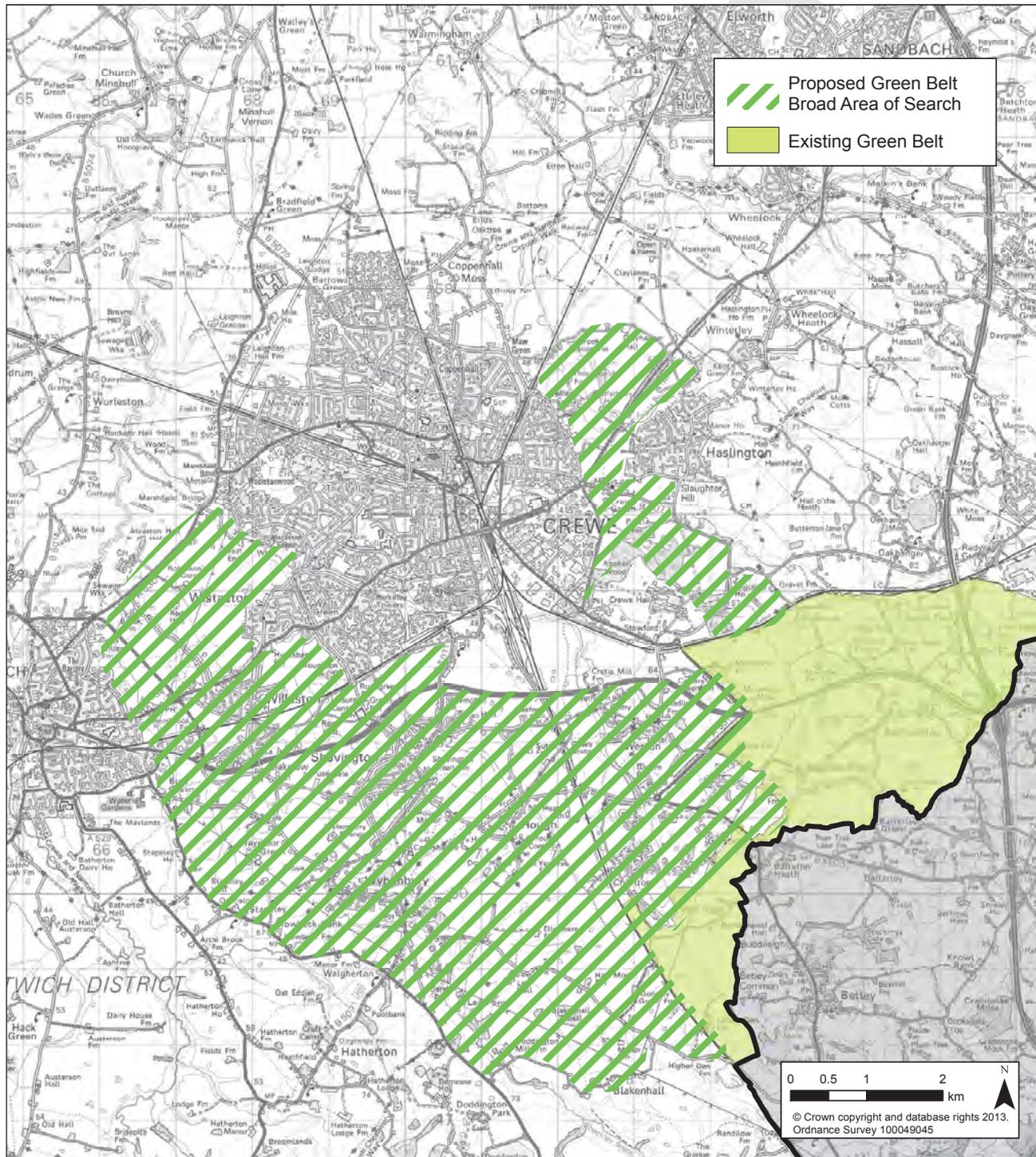
Figure 8.2 Proposed Green Belt Area of Search

8.52   The identification of Crewe as a spatial priority for growth brings significant opportunities, but also some threats. As Crewe grows to fulfil its potential it will become increasingly important to maintain the distinctive identity of the other settlements within the area of search and to prevent them merging into a Greater Crewe urban area.

Planning for Growth

8.53 As set out in the 'New Green Belt and Strategic Open Gaps' study, strong policy protection will be required to maintain the existing gaps between settlements that are at risk of coalescence resulting from the future growth of Crewe,

8.54 The detailed boundaries of the new area of Green Belt will be defined on the Adopted Policies Map; until that point the Green Gap boundaries, as defined in the saved policy of the Borough of Crewe & Nantwich Replacement Local Plan will remain in force, apart from where specific changes are proposed in this document.

8.55 The detailed boundaries of the new area of Green Belt, when defined in the Site Allocations and Development Policies Document, will need to be compatible with the growth aspirations set out for Crewe in the 'All Change for Crewe' and 'High Growth City' programme. It will be important to ensure that the new Green Belt does not unduly restrict the future growth of Crewe and consideration will need to be given as to how the town might grow in the future. Consequently, there is likely to be the need to safeguard areas of land between the urban area and the inner limit of the Green Belt to meet potential future development needs.

Key Evidence

1. Cheshire East Green Belt Assessment
2. New Green Belt and Strategic Open Gaps Study
3. Strategic Housing Market Assessment
4. Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update
5. Employment Land Review

Safeguarded Land

8.56 Green Belt boundaries are intended to endure over the longer-term. Therefore, when reviewing Green Belt boundaries, it is important to draw the new boundaries having regard to potential development needs arising well beyond the Plan period.

8.57 Consequently, it is necessary to identify areas of 'Safeguarded Land' that are between the urban area and the new Green Belt boundary in order to meet these potential long-term development requirements and avoid the need for another review of the Green Belt at the end of this Plan period.

Policy PG 4

Safeguarded Land

Safeguarded Land is land between the existing urban area and the inner boundary of the Green Belt that may be required to meet longer-term development needs stretching well beyond the period of the Local Plan.

1. Safeguarded Land is not allocated for development at the present time.
2. Safeguarded Land is outside of the urban area and therefore policies relating to development in the open countryside will apply.
3. Any development that would prejudice the future comprehensive development of Safeguarded Land will not be permitted.
4. Development of Safeguarded Land for uses other than those appropriate in the open countryside will not be permitted unless a review of the Local Plan has taken place to allocate the land following an assessment of the need for development at that time and the identification of the most appropriate locations for development to take place.
5. The areas of Safeguarded Land are (shown in Figure 8.3):

i.   Site CS 31 (Safeguarded) 'Lyme Green, Macclesfield' (17.9 hectares)

ii.   Site CS 32 (Safeguarded) 'South West Macclesfield' (45.4 hectares)

iii.   Site CS 33 (Safeguarded) 'North West Knutsford' (25.1 hectares)

iv.   Site CS 34 (Safeguarded) 'North Cheshire Growth Village, Handforth East' (19.8 hectares)

v.   Site CS 35 (Safeguarded) 'Prestbury Road, Wilmslow' (14.5 hectares)

vi.   Site CS 36 (Safeguarded) 'West of Upcast Lane, Wilmslow' (7.4 hectares)

6. In addition to these areas of Safeguarded Land listed; it may also be necessary to identify additional non-strategic areas of land to be safeguarded in the Site Allocations and Development Policies Document, which will include around 5 to10 hectares to serve the longer-term development needs in Poynton.

Justification

8.58 The National Planning Policy Framework requires that, when amending Green Belt boundaries, Local Planning Authorities should '*where necessary, identify in their plan areas of safeguarded land between the urban area and the Green Belt, in order to meet longer-term development needs stretching well beyond the plan period*'. They should also '*make clear that the safeguarded land is not allocated for development at the present time. Planning permission for the permanent development of safeguarded land should only be granted following a Local Plan review which proposes the development*' as well as '*satisfy themselves that Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of the development plan period*'".

8.59 The development needs beyond this plan period will be determined through future reviews of the Local Plan. To ensure that Green Belt boundaries will not need to be altered at the end of this Plan period, it is necessary to identify areas of Safeguarded Land.

8.60 In the absence of guidance on the amount of land that should be Safeguarded, a balance has been struck between the need to ensure the permanence of the Green Belt boundary and the NPPF requirement to make the most efficient use of land.

8.61 There will be a number of further options to accommodate future development needs beyond the Plan period, which could include measure such as (not exhaustive):

- Recycling of land within the urban areas, including the re-use of under-used employment areas, which will become redundant over the lifetime of the Plan. For example, there may be opportunities around the former mills off London Road in Macclesfield where there could be potential for a new urban village development;
- Additional town centre and higher-density development;
- Channelling development to areas within the inner boundary of the Green Belt (i.e. Greater Manchester and the Potteries conurbations);
- Channelling development to areas beyond the outer boundary of the Green Belt. It is anticipated that HS2 will bring extensive jobs and housing to Cheshire East post 2030. The full impact of HS2 on Cheshire East is unclear; however, it is likely that the HS2 project will prove decisive in supporting the case for significant growth and development to the south, in preference to the north of the borough. The likelihood is that this future development will be centred in and around Crewe, Alsager and Congleton.

8.62 At the end of the Plan period, the utilisation of the above measures where appropriate, plus the use of the identified safeguarded land if required will be sufficient to ensure that the Green Belt boundary will not need to be reviewed again at this time.

Planning for Growth

8.63 Additional Safeguarded Land within the new area of Green Belt adjacent to Crewe will be defined in the Site Allocations and Development Policies document, alongside the detailed boundaries of the new Green Belt.
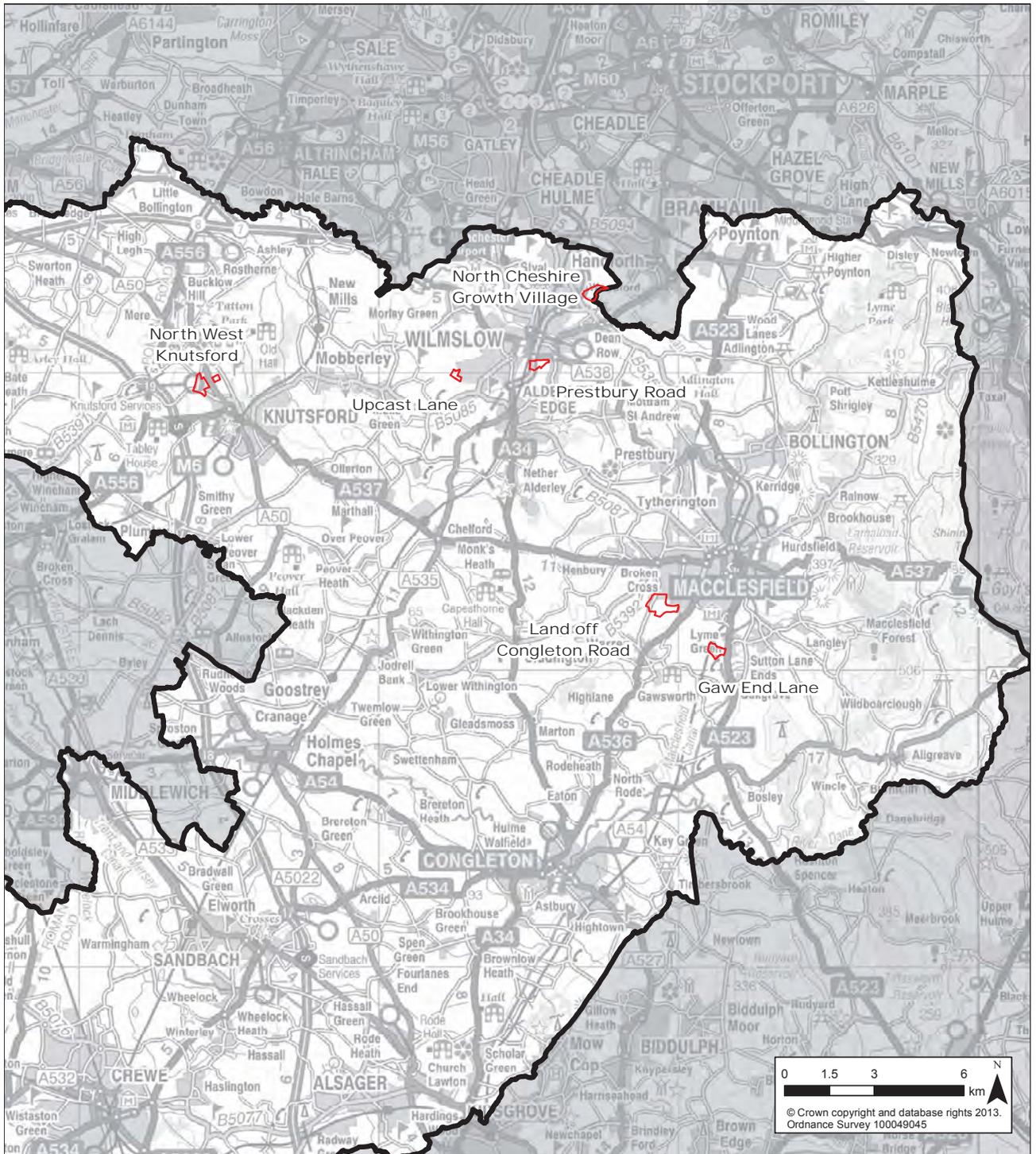
Figure 8.3 Safeguarded Land

Key Evidence

1. National Planning Policy Framework
2. Cheshire East Green Belt Assessment

Planning for Growth

Open Countryside

8.64   The protection of the open countryside from urbanising development is a principal objective of the Local Plan Strategy.

Policy PG 5

Open Countryside

1.   The Open Countryside is defined as the area outside of any settlement with a defined settlement boundary.

2.   Within the Open Countryside only development that is essential for the purposes of agriculture, forestry, outdoor recreation, public infrastructure, essential works undertaken by public service authorities or statutory undertakers, or for other uses appropriate to a rural area will be permitted.

3.   Exceptions may be made:

     i.   where there is the opportunity for the infilling of a small gap with one or two dwellings in an otherwise built up frontage or where the dwelling is exceptional in design and sustainable development terms;

     ii.   for the re-use of existing rural buildings where the building is permanent, substantial and would not require extensive alteration, rebuilding or extension

     iii. for the replacement of an existing dwelling by a new dwelling not materially larger than the dwelling it replaces

     iv.   for extensions to existing dwellings where the extension is not disproportionate to the original dwelling

     v.   for development that is essential for the expansion or redevelopment of an existing business

4.   The retention of gaps between settlements is important, in order to maintain the definition and separation of existing communities and the individual characters of such settlements. Such areas will be protected from inappropriate development.

5.   The acceptability of such development will be subject to compliance with all other relevant policies in the Local Plan. In this regard, particular attention should be paid to design and landscape character so the appearance and distinctiveness of the Cheshire East countryside is preserved and enhanced.

Justification

8.65   The Cheshire Countryside is highly valued by residents, visitors and businesses alike. From the sandstone ridge, across the Cheshire Plain and up to the Peak District Fringe, the Borough's countryside is cherished for its scenic, recreational, aesthetic and productive qualities. Much of the land is fertile and Cheshire East is a vital area for food production. It is the preservation of the countryside that is the key objective of this policy.

8.66   The Open Countryside comprises that part of the Local Plan area outside of identified settlements. Development in the Open Countryside will normally be unacceptable unless it can be shown to be essential to local needs and the rural economy and cannot be accommodated within existing settlements.

8.67   As part of this Policy, the gaps between settlements will be protected from inappropriate development, to make sure that the existing communities retain their separation and definition, along with their individual character, whilst the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside will be recognised and protected.

8.68   The spatial extent of Open Countryside is as defined in the saved policies of the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan, Congleton Borough Local Plan First Review and the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan; such areas will remain as open countryside, apart from where specific changes are proposed within this document, until detailed boundaries are established in the Site Allocations and Development Policies Document and will be shown on the Adopted Policies Map of the Local Plan.

8.69   Detailed site boundaries for Strategic Locations will be set through the Site Allocations and Development Policies Document. Until that time, Strategic Locations outside of existing settlement boundaries will fall within the Open Countryside. However, it is not the intention of policy to delay applications that conform with the principles of policies in this Strategy document. Therefore, the intention to define these boundaries will be a material consideration in the determination of such applications.

8.70   For clarification, the Open Countryside policy will also apply to areas designated as Safeguarded Land in Policy PG4.

8.71   The National Planning Policy Framework recognises that there will be cases where exceptions can be made to countryside policies, including: ' the exceptional quality or innovative design of the dwelling'. Criteria for meeting this test are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Key Evidence

1.   Determining the Settlement Hierarchy
2.   New Green Belt and Strategic Open Gaps Study

Spatial Distribution

8.72   The overall level of development between 2010 and 2030 is set out in Policy PG 1 'Overall Development Strategy'. Given the diverse nature of settlements in Cheshire East, each with different needs and constraints, it is appropriate to set indicative levels of development by settlement.

8.73   These figures are intended as a guide and are neither a ceiling nor a target. In addition to completions since 2010 and current commitments (e.g. planning permissions), provision will be made to allocate sufficient new sites[43] in each area to facilitate the levels of development set out in this policy.

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43   Through Local Plan Strategy Sites and Strategic Locations in this document and further non-strategic sites in the Site Allocations and Development Policies Document

Planning for Growth

Policy PG 6

Spatial Distribution of Development

1. The **Principal Towns** are expected to accommodate development as shown:

   i. Crewe: in the order of 65 hectares of employment land and 7,000 new homes;
   ii. Macclesfield: in the order of 15 hectares of employment land and 3,500 new homes;

2. The **Key Service Centres** are expected to accommodate development as shown:

   i. Alsager: in the order of 35 hectares of employment land and 1,600 new homes;
   ii. Congleton: in the order of 24 hectares of employment land and 3,500 new homes;
   iii. Handforth: in the order of 10 hectares of employment land and 150 new homes;
   iv. Knutsford: in the order of 10 hectares of employment land and 650 new homes;
   v. Middlewich: in the order of 75 hectares of employment land and 1,600 new homes;
   vi. Nantwich: in the order of 3 hectares of employment land and 1,900 new homes;
   vii. Poynton: in the order of 3 hectares of employment land and 200 new homes;
   viii. Sandbach: in the order of 20 hectares of employment land and 2,200 new homes;
   ix. Wilmslow: in the order of 8 hectares of employment land and 400 new homes;

3. The **New Settlement** at North Cheshire Growth Village at Handforth East is expected to accommodate in the order of 12 hectares of new employment land and 18,500 new homes.
4. The **Employment Improvement Area** at Wardle is expected to accommodate in the order of 61 hectares of employment land
5. The **Local Service Centres** are expected to accommodate in the order of 5 hectares of employment land and 2,500 new homes.
6. The **Other Settlements and Rural Areas** are expected to accommodate in the order of 5 hectares of employment land and 2,000 new homes.

Justification

8.74 The distribution of development between the various towns of the Borough has taken into account the following considerations:

- Settlement Hierarchy
- Various consultation stages including the Town Strategies, Development Strategy and Emerging Policy Principles
- Green Belt designations
- Known development opportunities including the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment
- Infrastructure capacity
- Environmental constraints
- Broad sustainable distribution of development requirements

8.75 The distribution also takes into account the core planning principles set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, which states that planning should take account of the varied roles and character of different areas, and actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling and focus significant development in locations that are or can be made sustainable.

8.76 Settlement boundaries for each of the settlements in Policy PG6 are as defined in the saved policies of the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Replacement Local Plan, Congleton Borough Local

Planning for Growth

Plan First Review and the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan and are as amended by the sites detailed in this Core Strategy document. Further amendments to settlement boundaries will be undertaken through the Site Allocations and Development Policies document.

8.77   Appendix A provides further detail about the distribution of development in Cheshire East. It should be noted that the number of new homes proposed and the levels of employment land do not necessarily match exactly with the numbers proposed in the Spatial Distribution of Development policy. This is to allow for a proportion of slippage, such as developments occurring after the plan period, or for sites coming forward at lower densities than currently expected.

8.78   Cheshire East is a high quality place to live and work. The Local Plan Strategy seeks to manage change over the Plan period to make sure that it reinforces the advantages the area already possesses, in a sustainable way. Table 8.4 presents an indicative distribution for the levels of the settlement hierarchy in the Borough.

8.79   The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) suggests that, on the basis of migration and travel to work data, Cheshire East is an appropriate geography for planning purposes over which to assess and meet housing requirements and comprises three functional housing market areas: one is focused on the former Macclesfield district and exhibits strong interactions with Greater Manchester market; a second is focused on the former Crewe and Nantwich district and is largely self-contained with migration from North Staffordshire; the third is centred around Congleton, having noticeable market interactions with North Staffordshire and Greater Manchester.

Town	New Homes		Employment Land	
	Total 2010 to 2030	Average each year[44]	Total 2010 to 2030	Average each year
Principal Towns				
Crewe	7,000	350	65ha	3.25ha
Macclesfield	3,500	175	15ha	0.75ha
Key Service Centres				
Alsager	1,600	80	35ha	1.75ha
Congleton	3,500	175	24ha	1.20ha
Handforth	150	8	10ha	0.50ha
Knutsford	650	33	10ha	0.50ha
Middlewich	1,600	80	75ha	3.75ha
Nantwich	1,900	95	3ha	0.15ha
Poynton	200	10	3ha	0.15ha
Sandbach	2,200	110	20ha	1.00ha
Wilmslow	400	20	8ha	0.40ha
New Settlements				

44   Annual averages have been rounded to the nearest whole number

Town	New Homes		Employment Land	
	Total 2010 to 2030	**Average each year**[44]	**Total 2010 to 2030**	**Average each year**
North Cheshire Growth Village	1850	93	12ha	0.60ha
Employment Improvement Area				
Wardle	0	0	61ha	3.05ha
Other Settlements				
Local Service Centres	2,500	125	5ha	0.25ha
Other Settlements and Rural Areas	2,000	100	5ha	0.25ha

Table 8.3 Indicative Distribution of Development

8.80   The Council recognises the importance of Green Belt in the Borough in terms of its function and the original reasons for its allocation. The Green Belt in the north of the Borough is drawn tightly around existing settlements. Additionally, the north of the Borough is under pressure from development spreading out from the Greater Manchester conurbation. Despite this there remains an identified need in the north of the Borough for both market and affordable housing to meet the Macclesfield functional housing market area and also to deliver employment land in the Borough. The Local Plan Strategy therefore seeks to allocate a small number of sites concentrated in particular areas to minimise the impact on the Green Belt.

8.81   The approach of the Local Plan Strategy has been to focus development in the Principal Towns of Crewe and Macclesfield, delivering the aspirations set out in 'All Change for Crewe' and meeting the housing market and employment requirements of Macclesfield, whilst limiting the impact on the Green Belt.

8.82   It is also appropriate to direct a significant proportion of development to the remaining higher-order centres (the Key Service Centres), which provide a good range of services and opportunities for employment, retail and education alongside good public transport links. New development in the Key Service Centres will help to sustain services and facilities in these settlements and assist in improving the vitality and viability of their retail centres against a backdrop of an ageing population and increased competition from out-of-town and online retailing. In the Key Service Centres, an appropriate level of new employment provision is planned, in order to allow for employment growth to meet local needs and reduce the need to travel.

8.83   Outside of the Green Belt areas, substantial development in the Key Service Centres recognises the role of these towns in the provision of essential services. For Key Service Centres surrounded by Green Belt, the scale of development proposed is limited so that the fundamental objectives of the Green Belt are not compromised whilst meeting an appropriate proportion of locally-arising needs. This is essential to provide new affordable housing and new jobs and to sustain services and facilities in the settlements.

8.84   The focus of development around Key Service Centres that are not surrounded by Green Belt has been to encourage future inward investment and sustain the vitality and vibrancy of those towns. Development in towns such as Congleton will result in additional investment both in infrastructure and services including the delivery of the Congleton Link Road, which will provide for additional land for development and investment into the town.

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44   Annual averages have been rounded to the nearest whole number

Planning for Growth

8.85 The North Cheshire Growth Village at Handforth East will:

- Provide access to services and employment opportunities located in Manchester
- Provide access to services and facilities in Handforth
- Effectively meet a significant proportion of the needs of the northern Green Belt towns, due to its closeness to a number of settlements
- Provide the funding to support the delivery of infrastructure improvements required to support the economic growth of Cheshire East
- Reduce the impact of the release of Green Belt on existing communities
- Allow the Council to reflect the opinions of the local communities within the north of the Borough who wish to see the general extent of the Green Belt around existing settlements to be maintained
- Maximise opportunities for beneficial development, due to the limited number of physical constraints to the site

Key Evidence

1. Determining the Settlement Hierarchy
2. Strategic Housing Market Assessment
3. Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment

Planning for Growth

9
Planning for Sustainable Development

9 Planning for Sustainable Development

9.1   Cheshire East has the exciting opportunity to deliver successful sustainable development and support the growth of vibrant sustainable communities through the envisaged growth within the Borough. The concept of sustainability is an extremely complicated one with many interwoven factors needing to be addressed to ensure a successful approach. The UK Sustainable Development Strategy *Securing the Future* sets out five guiding principles of sustainable development: living within the planet's environmental limits; ensuring a strong, healthy and just society; achieving a sustainable economy; promoting good governance; and using sound science responsibly.

Policy SD 1

Sustainable Development in Cheshire East

In order to achieve sustainable development in Cheshire East, the following considerations to development will apply. Development should wherever possible:

1.   Contribute to creating a strong, responsive and competitive economy for Cheshire East;
2.   Prioritise investment and growth within the Principal Towns and Key Service Centres;
3.   Contribute to the creation of sustainable communities;
4.   Provide appropriate infrastructure to meet the needs of the local community including: education; health and social care; transport; communication technology; landscaping and open space; sport and leisure; community facilities; water; waste water; and energy;
5.   Provide access to local jobs, services and facilities, reflecting the community's needs;
6.   Ensure that development is accessible by public transport, walking and cycling;
7.   Provide safe access and sufficient car parking in accordance with adopted highway standards;
8.   Support the health, safety, social and cultural well-being of the residents of Cheshire East;
9.   Provide a locally distinct, high quality, sustainable, well designed and durable environment;
10. Contribute towards the achievement of equality and social inclusion through positive cooperation with the local community;
11. Use appropriate technologies to reduce carbon emissions and create a low carbon economy;
12. Incorporate sustainable design and construction methods;
13. Support the achievement of vibrant and prosperous town and village centres;
14. Contribute to protecting and enhancing the natural, built ,historic and cultural environment;
15. Make efficient use of land, protect the best and most versatile agricultural land and make best use of previously developed land where possible; and
16. Prioritise the most accessible and sustainable locations.

Justification

9.2   The National Planning Policy Framework definition of sustainable development is: *"meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".* The Framework outlines an approach to sustainable development which seeks to foster positive growth leading to economic, environmental and social progress whilst finding the means to accommodate new ways by which we will earn our living in a competitive world. The Framework establishes the need to balance these aims and provide for the needs of a rising, longer living population, whilst responding to the changes that new technologies offer us and ensuring that our lives, and the places in which we live them, can change for the better.

9.3   Whilst the Local Plan Strategy includes the presumption in favour of sustainable development as a 'golden thread' running through the strategy, Policy SD1 seeks to further define the considerations used at a local level in order to achieve sustainable development in Cheshire East in line with achieving the vision and strategic priorities set out in the Local Plan Strategy.

Key Evidence

1.   Determining the Settlement Hierarchy
2.   Cheshire East Infrastructure Delivery Plan
3.   Cheshire East Sustainability Appraisal

Policy SD 2

Sustainable Development Principles

1.   All development will be expected to:

    i.   Provide or contribute towards identified infrastructure, services or facilities. Such infrastructure should precede the delivery of other forms of development, wherever possible;

    ii.   Contribute positively to an area's character and identity, creating or reinforcing local distinctiveness in terms of:

        a.   Height, scale, form and grouping;
        b.   Choice of materials;
        c.   External design features;
        d.   Massing of development - the balance between built form and green/public spaces;
        e.   Green Infrastructure; and
        f.   Relationship to neighbouring properties, street scene and the wider neighbourhood;

    iii.   Respect and, where possible, enhance the landscape character of the area. Particular attention will be paid toward significant landmarks and landscape features;

    iv.   Respect, and where possible enhance, the significance of heritage assets, including their wider settings;

    v.   Avoid the permanent loss of areas of agricultural land quality of 1, 2 or 3a, unless the strategic need overrides these issues;

    vi.   Be socially inclusive and, where suitable, integrate into the local community;

    vii.   Avoid high risk flood areas, or where necessary provide appropriate mitigation measures;

    viii.   Use appropriate design, construction, insulation, layout and orientation to create developments that:

        a.   Are resilient to climate change;
        b.   Minimise energy use;
        c.   Use natural resources prudently;
        d.   Promote the use, recovery and recycling of materials;
        e.   Integrate or allow future integration of renewable energy technologies;
        f.   Discourage crime and anti-social behaviour;
        g.   Minimise trip generation;
        h.   Minimise waste and pollution; and
        i.   Are water efficient.

Planning for Sustainable Development

2. In addition to the above principles, residential development will be expected to:

   i. Provide open space, of an extent, quality, design and location appropriate to the development and the local community;

   ii. Provide access to a range[45] of forms of public transport, open space and key services and amenities[46]; and

   iii. Incorporate measures to encourage travel by sustainable modes of transport such as walking, cycling and public transport.

3. In addition to the above principles, employment development will be expected to:

   i. Provide an attractive setting to development in order to create an attractive and successful place to work, with minimum impact on the surrounding area;

   ii. Provide a flexible development that can serve a range of sizes and types of employment; and

   iii. Maximise opportunities for access and deliveries by a range of forms of sustainable transport.

4. In addition to the above principles, retail/town centre development will be expected to:

   i. Provide high quality pedestrian and cycle facilities, including secure cycle parking;

   ii. Be located so as to reduce the need to travel, especially by car, and to enable people as far as possible to meet their needs locally; and

   iii. Provide good town centre linkages, by walking, cycling and public transport, if the development is located on the edge or out of town.

Justification

9.4   Planning, through the Local Plan Strategy, has a key role in addressing the impacts of climate change in terms of both mitigation and adaptation. The Local Plan Strategy sets out a minimum requirement of 27,000 new homes and the accommodation of a minimum of 300 hectares of employment land by 2030, which could considerably raise the amount of carbon emissions and impact on the wider environment unless adequate measures are introduced to combat this. Directing development to the most sustainable locations and thus improving accessibility and reducing the need to travel through the spatial strategy will have a significant impact on climate change at the local level. However, individual development proposals must themselves also play a key role in mitigating the causes and adapting to the effects of climate change.

9.5   Table 9.1 provides a guide to the appropriate distances for access to services and amenities. A methodology for the assessment of walking distances has been informed by that of the North West Sustainability Checklist (now revoked) which has been backed by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). The distances are considered appropriate for the region and have been used for the purposes of informing the Sustainability Appraisal and the accessibility of proposed developments.

9.6   In assessing the distances to services and amenities, consideration will also be given to the quality of the pedestrian, cycle or other transportation routes.

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45   As a guide, a range is considered to be within the maximum recommended distance of a bus stop; a multi-functional open space; and a convenience store, in addition to four or more other services or amenities, dependent on location

46   Recommended distances are set out in table 9.1 below. The Council will have regard to proposed improvements to services and amenities that are to be brought forward as part of the development.

Planning for Sustainable Development

Criteria	Distance
Public Transport	
Bus Stop	500m
Public Right of Way	500m
Railway Station	2km where geographically possible
Open Space	
Amenity Open Space	500m
Children's Playground	500m
Outdoor Sports	1km
Public Park and Village Green	1km
Services and Amenities	
Convenience Store	500m
Supermarket	1km
Post Box	500m
Post Office	1km
Bank or Cash Machine	1km
Pharmacy	1km
Primary School	1km
Secondary School	2km
Medical Centre	1km
Leisure Facilities	1km
Local Meeting Place / Community Centre	1km
Public House	1km
Child Care Facility (nursery or crèche)	1km

Table 9.1 Access to services and amenities

Key Evidence

1. Determining the Settlement Hierarchy
2. Cheshire East Infrastructure Delivery Plan
3. Cheshire East Sustainability Appraisal

Planning for Sustainable Development

Planning for Sustainable Development

10
Infrastructure

10 Infrastructure

10.1   Sufficient appropriate infrastructure is crucial to the well-being of any society. From the roads, railways and cycle paths that cross the Borough to schools, health care facilities and the pipes below ground that provide us with water, gas and telecommunications, a fully operational, well-planned, well connected and well-maintained infrastructure has to be at the heart of good planning, now and into the future. Infrastructure is also essential for economic development, to underpin the jobs-led growth strategy.

10.2   The timely provision of infrastructure is associated with the need which arises directly as a consequence of that development. It is important to ensure that development is adequately supported by appropriate infrastructure, whether using existing or through new provision. Delivering or improving infrastructure on time is therefore extremely important in ensuring that roads, local services and facilities can cope with added demand.

Policy IN 1

Infrastructure

1. Infrastructure delivery will take place in a co-ordinated manner guided by the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and any additional site specific requirements to support the Local Plan Strategy proposals. These will include mechanisms for the funding and delivery of physical, social, community, environmental and any other infrastructure required to support development and regeneration. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan will be kept under review and if necessary revised as and when required. Cheshire East Council is working in partnership with infrastructure providers and other delivery agencies to provide essential infrastructure to deliver the Local Plan.

2. The Council will also require new and improved social and community facilities, utilities infrastructure and other infrastructure to be provided in a timely manner to meet the needs of new development as they arise so as to make a positive contribution towards safeguarding and creating sustainable communities, promote social inclusion and reduce deprivation.

3. The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), upon adoption of the Charging Schedule, will be used to pool developer contributions towards local and strategic infrastructure that will serve a wider area than any one development in particular. Further information is set out in Policy IN2 (Developer Contributions)

Justification

10.3   The term 'infrastructure' is broadly used for planning purposes to cover all the service requirements that are needed to make places function efficiently and effectively and in a way that creates sustainable communities. Infrastructure is commonly split into three main categories, defined as:

1. Physical: the broad collection of systems and facilities that house and transport people and goods, and provide services including:

   - Transportation networks - including public transport, road networks, provisions for walking and cycling;
   - Water - including wastewater treatment and water supply, including fire hydrants

- Flood risk management
- Energy - including heat, gas, electricity
- Telecommunications networks - telephones, mobile phones, broadband and other new communication technologies
- Waste provision - including domestic waste and recycling, commercial and construction waste
- Public realm - street lighting, seating, planting

2. Green: the physical environment within and between our cities, towns and villages. A network of multi-functional open spaces including formal parks, gardens, woodlands, green corridors, waterways and open countryside.

3. Social and Community: the range of core learning, wellbeing, sports and other activities. It can include the provision of:

- Health facilities - including hospitals, doctors and dentists surgeries
- Social care
- Education - including schools, colleges and skills training
- Social and community facilities - including Places of Worship, community centres, support for community groups and projects
- Leisure facilities - indoor and outdoor, including sports pitches and changing facilities
- Cultural facilities - including libraries, museums and theatres

10.4 Improvements to infrastructure will be fundamental to achieving the vision for the development of Cheshire East up to 2030 and are necessary to deal with existing deficiencies and to cater for a growing and ageing population. The proposed growth of Cheshire East must be supported by improvements to physical, social and green infrastructure.

10.5 Improved connectivity forms a vital part of the Local Plan Strategy in terms of assisting economic growth and improving the environment. As well as maximising the benefits of Crewe as a national rail hub, substantial new road infrastructure will be required to open up the east of Cheshire and better connect the M6 with main settlements and surrounding major roads. At this stage, only corridors of interest for new roads are indicated. Detailed alignments will be included in the Site Allocations and Development Policies document.

10.6 It should be recognised that the delivery of the full range of infrastructure needs of existing and new communities is dependent on partnership working between a variety of public and private sector agencies. Throughout the preparation of the Local Plan Strategy, discussions have taken place with key infrastructure delivery partners and will continue to take place through the production of the Local Plan.

10.7 Where new development creates a need for new or improved infrastructure, contributions from developers will be sought to make the development acceptable on the impact on local services.

10.8 The infrastructure requirements of development proposals will be assessed on their own individual merits; but in some circumstances there will be a necessity to view individual applications collectively in assessing the combined off site requirements in line with the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

10.9 Strategic infrastructure requirements are set out in the Local Plan Strategy and in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. Whilst particular infrastructure needs have been identified, it is recognised that there needs to be flexibility to allow the Council to seek developer contributions through Section 106 agreements and other mechanisms for infrastructure needs that emerge during the plan period.

10.10 The Council intends to locally introduce the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) approach to Developer Contributions. The Levy will partly replace Section 106 provisions and is a charge based on the floor area of new developments. The charge rates will be set out in a Charging Schedule which will be prepared after the adoption of the Local Plan Strategy.

Key Evidence

1. Infrastructure Delivery Plan

Policy IN 2

Developer Contributions

1. Developer contributions will be sought to make sure that the necessary physical, social, public realm, economic and green infrastructure is in place to deliver development. Contributions will be used to mitigate the adverse impacts of development (including any cumulative impact). Such contributions will help facilitate the infrastructure needed to support sustainable development.
2. Development proposals will be expected to provide a contribution towards the cost of infrastructure. Subject to statutory processes and regulations, contributions may be collected towards:

    i.   Initial costs, e.g. design and development work and pump priming of projects or programmes;
    ii. Capital costs;
    iii. Ongoing revenue such as the management and maintenance of services and facilities;
    iv. Any other infrastructure related costs permitted by law and identified as a local need;
    v.   Contributions will be collected through Section 106 agreements and / or through a Community Infrastructure Levy once a Charging Schedule is in place; and
    vi. Until a Charging Schedule is in place, contributions from Section 106 agreements may be pooled to meet the costs of strategic infrastructure, where this meets the legal tests as set out in the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations. Once the Charging Schedule is in place, Section 106 agreements will continue to be used for site specific costs and affordable housing.

Justification

10.11 Any Section 106 planning obligations can only be taken into account in determining planning applications where they meet the following tests from Regulation 122 of the CIL Regulations 2010:

- Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
- Directly related to the development; and
- Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

10.12 Developer contributions secured through planning obligations will no longer be able to be pooled from more than five different obligations to deliver the provision of a certain project or type of infrastructure from April 2015 or the date of adoption of the CIL Charging Schedule, whichever comes first. This restriction, from Regulation 123 of the CIL Regulations 2010, is intended to ensure that local planning authorities use CIL instead of planning obligations to secure contributions for infrastructure that serves a wider area than just the specific development site or group of sites.

Infrastructure

10.13   The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), upon adoption of the Charging Schedule, will be used to pool developer contributions towards local and strategic infrastructure that will serve a wider area than any one development in particular.

10.14   The CIL is a locally set standard charge that can be applied to new development to fund infrastructure. It is calculated in £ per sq m of new buildings or extensions and is based on the fact that the value of land or property typically rises as a result of development. Whilst the charge can be varied by area and type of development on the basis of viability evidence, there are no other reasons for setting differential CIL charges.

10.15   Cheshire East Council have identified, in an Infrastructure Delivery Plan, what strategic infrastructure is needed to support the amount and distribution of growth proposed in the Local Plan Strategy, and how much it will cost, including the funding shortfall identified after taking account of already committed funding. Before developer contributions can be sought through CIL to make up at least part of this shortfall, a Levy Charging Schedule will be published, consulted on, examined and adopted, establishing a Levy Charge.

10.16   CIL may be used to fund the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure that arises as a result of increased development related demand. The following types of infrastructure may be considered for funding through CIL, although the list is not exhaustive. These are:

a.   Roads and other transport facilities
b.   Flood defences
c.   Schools and other educational facilities
d.   Improvements to public realm
e.   Medical facilities
f.   Sporting and recreational facilities
g.   Open spaces

10.17   The provision of affordable housing or financial contributions towards affordable housing cannot currently be secured through CIL. Such contributions are secured through S106 agreements.

10.18   Work on the Cheshire East CIL will commence following the Submission stage of the Local Plan Strategy. It is expected that at this stage, the Council will have a greater understanding of the infrastructure requirements for Cheshire East. The examination and adoption of the CIL is expected to follow shortly after the Local Plan Strategy adoption.

10.19   The Government has stated that Parish Councils can receive 15% of CIL payments, capped at £100 per dwelling. This is raised to an uncapped 25% where the Parish Council has a Neighbourhood Plan. The money is paid directly to the Parish Council, to be spent on community projects of their choosing.

Key Evidence

1.   CIL Regulations
2.   Infrastructure Delivery Plan

11
Enterprise and Growth

11 Enterprise and Growth

11.1   The Cheshire East economy is already the most successful in the North of England. This Local Plan Strategy will ensure the right foundations are in place to sustain this success over the next twenty years.

11.2   The vision for economic growth is encapsulated with the vision of 'East Cheshire, Engine of the North'. This strategic framework builds on the existing asset base and sets out a growth plan over the Plan period.

11.3   The vision for economic growth captures two concepts which represent the diversity and strength of the Borough:

> *Crewe High Growth City/M6 Corridor – a growth proposition for the south of the Borough centred around Crewe as a principal town but linking to a wider set of growth 'nodes' using the M6 Corridor as a key attractor and asset to support our ambition.*
>
> *North Cheshire Science Corridor - to secure North East Cheshire as a location of national and global significance for advanced scientific analysis and research, particularly pharmaceuticals R&D, pharmaceuticals manufacturing, radio-astrophysics and astronomy.*

Crewe: High Growth City

11.4   As the largest town in South Cheshire, Crewe is already the area's primary population centre and its major economic hub. Its 5000 businesses include concentrations of professional services, distribution, logistics and advanced engineering built on its rich rail and automotive heritage. It is located in not only one of the most prosperous parts of the region but the best connected, creating the perfect location for job creation, growth and development.
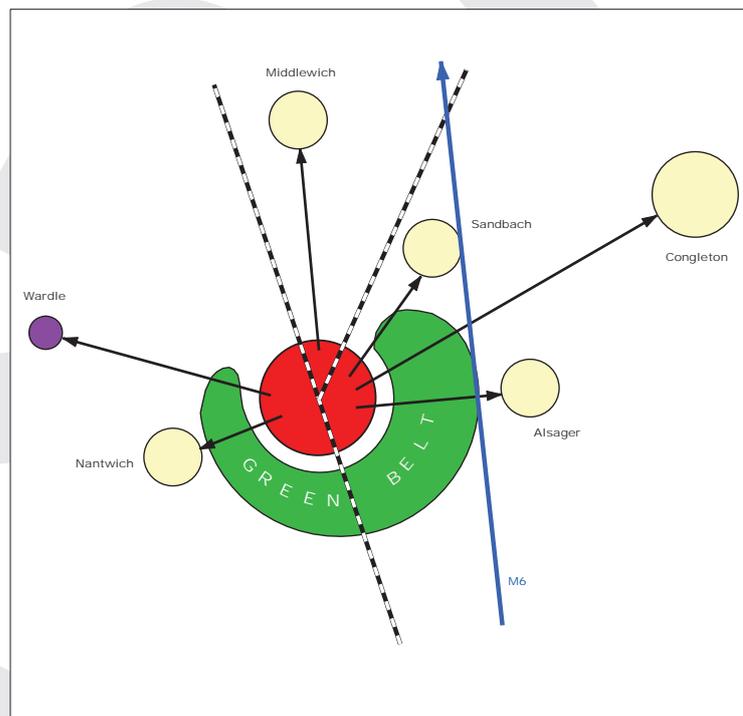
Figure 11.1 High Growth City Concept Plan

11.5 The jobs-led vision encapsulated by this Local Plan Strategy provides the opportunity for decentralisation of the economy outside of London and the South East, creating a 'hub' of investment in science, automotive and rail engineering. The recent £1 billion investment announced by Bentley secures Crewe's place as a **premier location for excellence in manufacturing and engineering.**

11.6 Linked by the M6 Growth Corridor, expansion of employment land in Congleton will lead to future investment in the bedrock of manufacturing and engineering which is key to the town's heritage and future prosperity. **Major investment in infrastructure in Congleton** via a new link road is also proposed alongside the expansion of employment space and new housing development.

North Cheshire Science Corridor

11.7 North East Cheshire, as part of a wider North West Science & Technology cluster, has the potential to become a UK lead specifically to aid commercialisation of innovation in the 'Key Enabling'[47], 'Great Eight'[48] and 'Health-Science' technology fields. The area is host to a net concentration of globally significant companies which represent a hotbed of intellectual capacity and entrepreneurship. Cheshire East has particularly high levels of R&D activities within Great Britain, with Cheshire East accounting for **36.9% of the region's R&D jobs and 3.3% of the country's (GB) R&D jobs.** [49]

11.8 This success is founded on an outstanding track record of creating and building new businesses and attracting investment in a high quality environment with the advantage of global connectivity, both physical and digital. The focus of the Council and this Local Plan Strategy will be to nurture and strengthen our science and technology base to create a Super-Hub of global companies and a growing base of SMEs for north Cheshire. Our vision is that by 2030, the North East Cheshire Science Corridor will sit clearly within a **flourishing science and technology ecosystem spanning across Cheshire and Warrington**.

11.9 There will be a **Super-Hub of global companies and a growing base of SMEs** delivering a **dynamic model of open innovation and growth** from high quality and well connected locations.

11.10 With globally significant companies working alongside world-leading research institutions, there will be an **established network of innovation in science and technology,** underpinned by revolutionary and innovative finance tools to promote a **growing base of enterprising and high growth SME**s.

11.11 At the heart of this hotbed of science and technology will be a **continually high-skilled and entrepreneurial workforce**, nurtured through a **network of leading research institutions and specialised education facilities**.

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47 The 'Key Enabling Technologies' are: 'Advanced Materials', 'Biosciences', 'Electronics, Sensors and Photonics', and 'Information and Communication Technology (ICT)'. See: Enabling Technologies Strategy, Technology Strategy Board.

48 The 'Great Eight' are: 'Big Data', 'Space', 'Robotics and Autonomous Systems', 'Synthetic Biology', 'Regenerative Medicine', 'Agri-Science', 'Advanced Materials', and 'Energy'. See: Eight Great Technologies, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills

49 Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) 2011, ONS, NOMIS. Crown Copyright.

Enterprise and Growth
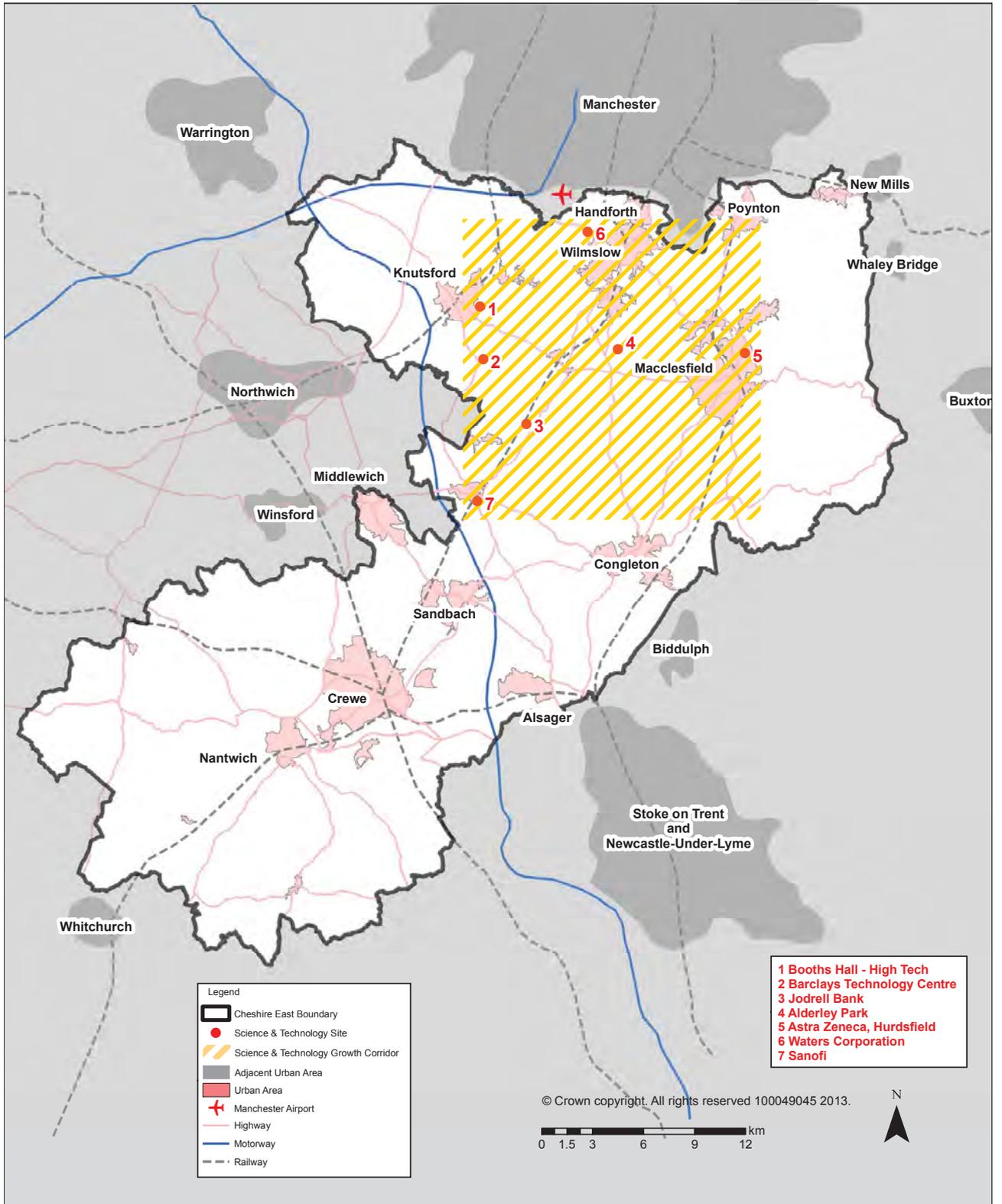
Figure 11.2 Science and Technology Growth Corridor

Legend

▭	Cheshire East Boundary
●	Science & Technology Site
▨	Science & Technology Growth Corridor
▨	Adjacent Urban Area
▨	Urban Area
✈	Manchester Airport
—	Highway
—	Motorway
---	Railway

1 Booths Hall - High Tech
2 Barclays Technology Centre
3 Jodrell Bank
4 Alderley Park
5 Astra Zeneca, Hurdsfield
6 Waters Corporation
7 Sanofi

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km
0 1.5 3   6   9   12

11.12 The Local Plan Strategy provides a vital tool to interpret our wider vision into a spatial planning framework which will be complemented by a wider investment strategy and delivery plan for the Borough.

11.13 The Local Plan Strategy will support delivery of the Economic Growth vision by:

- Providing the right sites in the right locations with the right infrastructure, enhanced by the highest quality of life – to attract the best talent.
- Increasing the supply of business incubation, including premises and targeted business support – making best use of existing employment sites and brownfield development in town centres.
- Maximising the potential of major employment sites such as Alderley Park and Hurdsfield to create the conditions for open innovation and science-led collaborations.
- Ensure a housing offer of the highest quality providing a major incentive for a highly qualified workforce to live and locate in the area.
- Create stronger public transport and wider connectivity linked to Manchester Airport, the M6 corridor and the Manchester conurbation.
- Protect and improve the quality of the environment, to provide the wider quality of life factors required.

11.14   Across the borough there is a need for sustainable, jobs led growth, in conjunction with planning ahead to 2030 and beyond, additional opportunities for growth will be assessed as they arise. It is anticipated that the majority of future employment growth opportunities will be to the south of the borough; with the north exhibiting distinct trends in science and service sector growth. As a result, we do not support high levels of housing growth to the north of the borough.

Economic Prosperity

11.15   Cheshire East's economy is characterised by a broad range of industries and services, with particular strengths in pharmaceuticals, financial businesses and advanced engineering, whilst the rural nature of the Borough is reflected in the relatively high number of people employed in agriculture and tourism.

Policy EG 1

Economic Prosperity

1.   Proposals for employment development (Use Classes B1, B2 or B8) will be supported in principle within the Principal Towns, Key Service Centres and Local Service Centres as well as on employment land allocated in the Development Plan.

2.   Proposals for employment development on non-allocated employment sites will be supported where they are in the right location and support the strategy, role and function of the town, as identified in Settlement Hierarchy, Spatial Distribution of Development and in any future plans, including Neighbourhood Plans, where applicable.

Justification

11.16   The National Planning Policy Framework states that *"o help achieve economic growth, local planning authorities should plan proactively to meet the development needs of business and support an economy fit for the 21st century"*.

11.17   Cheshire East's employment policy seeks to encourage growth in the Borough and secure a greater number of jobs for its resident workforce. The Cheshire East Local Plan will be focused on delivering growth including ensuring that there is an appropriate balance between jobs, services and facilities and homes, creating a more sustainable pattern of development in the Borough.

Enterprise and Growth

11.18 Policy EG1 supports the delivery of opportunities for the provision of employment land that may come forward in the Principal Towns, Key Service Centres and Local Service Centres, in addition to the employment land that is allocated in the Local Plan Strategy. This policy will contribute to the achievement of the strategic objective to promote economic prosperity by creating conditions for business growth. The potential for employment growth in the visitor economy is dealt with in Policy EG4 (Tourism).

Key Evidence

1. Employment Land Review
2. Employment Monitoring

Policy EG 2

Rural Economy

Outside the Principal Towns, Key Service Centres and Local Service Centres, developments that:

1. Provide opportunities for local rural employment development that supports the vitality of rural settlements;
2. Create or extend rural based tourist attractions, visitor facilities and recreational uses;
3. Encourage the retention and expansion of existing businesses, particularly through the conversion of existing buildings and farm diversification;
4. Encourage the creation and expansion of sustainable farming and food production businesses and allow for the adaption of modern agricultural practises;
5. Are considered essential to the wider strategic interest of the economic development of Cheshire East, as determined by the Council; and
6. Support the retention and delivery of community services such as shops and public houses, and village halls

Will be supported where the development:

i. Meets sustainable development objectives as set out in policies MP1, SD1 and SD2 of the Local Plan Strategy;
ii. Supports the rural economy, and could not reasonably be expected to locate within a designated centre by reason of their products sold[50];
iii. Would not undermine the delivery of strategic employment allocations;
iv. Is supported by adequate infrastructure;
v. Is consistent in scale with its location and does not adversely affect nearby buildings and the surrounding area or detract from residential amenity;
vi. Is well sited and designed in order to conserve and where possible enhance the character and quality of the landscape and buildings; and
vii. Does not conflict with Policies PG3, PG4, PG5, PG6, SE3, SE4, SE5, SE6 and SE7 of the Local Plan Strategy.

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50 The majority of goods sold should be produced on site

Enterprise and Growth

Justification

11.19   The National Planning Policy Framework states that *'planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development'*.

11.20   The rural economy provides a wide range of important goods and services, including clean water, biodiversity, recreational space and opportunities, food energy and carbon management. Rural land is a vital resource for mitigating and adapting to the various challenges of climate change, such as drought and flooding. The countryside is also home to settlements and communities, where economic activities include agriculture and other farm based industries, as well as businesses associated with countryside pursuits, including rural tourism and leisure. Beyond farming, the rural economy in Cheshire East supports many businesses, including wholesale and retail trade, repairs, manufacturing, health and social work, horse-related enterprises (breeding, training and livery) and real estate, renting and business activities.

11.21   Planning has a key role to play in ensuring that the rural economy is viable, meets the needs of existing residents of rural areas and that growth and development is appropriate to the scale of each area and that it has a positive impact upon biodiversity; geodiversity; the landscape and the historic environment.

Key Evidence

1.   Employment Land Review

Policy EG 3

Existing and Allocated Employment Sites

1.   Existing employment sites will be protected for employment use unless:

   i.   Premises are causing significant nuisance or environmental problems that could not be mitigated; or
   ii.   The site is no longer suitable or viable for employment use; and

      a.   There is no potential for modernisation or alternate employment uses; and
      b.   No other occupiers can be found[51].

2.   Where it can be demonstrated that there is a case for alternative development on existing employment sites, these will be expected to meet sustainable development objectives as set out in Policies MP1, SD1 and SD2 of the Local Plan Strategy. All opportunities must be explored to incorporate an element of employment development as part of a mixed use scheme.
3.   Subject to regular review, allocated employment sites will be protected for employment use in order to maintain an adequate and flexible supply of employment land to attract new and innovative businesses, to enable existing businesses to grow and to create new and retain existing jobs.

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51   To demonstrate that no other occupiers can be found, the site should be marketed at a realistic price reflecting its employment status for a period of not less than 2 years. The Council will require evidence that a proper marketing exercise has been carried out including a record of all offers and expressions of interest received

Enterprise and Growth

Justification

11.22   The National Planning Policy Framework states that *'policies should avoid the long term protection of sites allocated for employment use where there is no reasonable prospect of a site being used for that purpose'.*

11.23   In order to provide a range of employment sites, particularly for inward investment and limit the need for development on greenfield land, it is vital that existing employment sites, premises and allocations that are viable for continued employment use are safeguarded. This will make sure that job opportunities are maintained and the economic health of the Borough is protected. The release of viable employment sites or premises to other uses may only be made where their loss would not cause harm to business or employment opportunities, or where there are unacceptable amenity impacts for local residents.

11.24   For clarification, this policy applies to all sites currently in use for employment purposes (B1, B2 and B8 uses in the Use Classes Order) as well as sites allocated for such uses.

11.25   There are already a number of key employment areas in the Borough, including Alderley Park, Hurdsfield Industrial Estate, Bentley Motors, Radbroke Hall, Jodrell Bank, Booths Hall and Midpoint 18. These are of particular significance to the economy in Cheshire East collectively employing over 13,000 personnel and the following provides an overview of their contribution to the Borough's strong economic base together with additional key sites that form part of the Borough's employment land portfolio:-

- **Alderley Park** - Currently AstraZeneca's largest research facility and the company's global centre for cancer research. A Masterplan/Planning Brief or similar for the site will be developed over the next 12 months. The objective of this document will be to maximise the employment potential of the site to deliver a life science vision, and also to look at wider uses for all aspects of the site which would meet community/local need.
- **Hurdsfield Industrial Estate, Macclesfield** - As the largest traditional industrial estate in Cheshire East, it is home to a number of major multinational companies, including AstraZeneca and BASF Performance Products Ltd. This Industrial Estate accommodates an important concentration of activity. Work is ongoing to maximise the employment uses and land uses on the Hurdsfield estate, to ensure it plays its role in delivering our economic vision for the Borough and create growth opportunities for local and new companies seeking to locate in North Cheshire.
- **Bentley Motors, Crewe** - This is the town's largest private sector employer, currently employing 3,500 people. As the company's UK Headquarters, the site is home to all aspects of car production from design, engineering, manufacturing, quality, and sales and marketing. Following an announcement in July 2013 of an £800m investment by the company to manufacture its new Sport Utility Vehicle, plans for significant growth at the site are expected alongside the creation of 1,000 new jobs. With advanced manufacturing accounting for 12.3% [52] of employment in Cheshire East, the Bentley site is at the centre of this growing sector, and is responsible for a growing supply chain in the nearby area.
- **Radbroke Hall, Knutsford** - The site currently accommodates the UK Strategic Centre for Barclays Bank Plc and is home to the Global Infrastructure and Service Delivery Teams. The site is at the forefront of a growing IT and financial / insurance service industry, of which Cheshire East has a higher concentration than in the North West Region as a whole.
- **Jodrell Bank, Holmes Chapel** - prominently located in the heart of Cheshire East this is a unique site, which is of both historical and scientific significance as a leading facility for radio astrophysics and scientific research in the UK. The Discovery Centre also offers an important contribution to Cheshire East visitor economy. The site is also on the UK National Shortlist for UNESCO in a bid for World Heritage Status due to its potential outstanding universal value.

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52   2011 Census, DORIC Online, September 2013

- **Booths Hall, Knutsford** - Booths Hall combines an 85 hectare parkland setting with flexible, high quality office accommodation which is home to a growing number of small high growth, high tech companies and major multinationals. The site offers a quality employment location in the heart of Cheshire with good links into public transport and road/rail links. The park is a major contributor to Knutsford and the wider regional economy with many leading international and knowledge-based businesses located there. 80% of the existing occupiers operate in Cheshire East's growth sectors.
- **Midpoint 18, Middlewich** - This is a mixed use business park currently home to major companies such as Wincanton, Kuehne + Nagel, and Tesco. The current development footprint provides 128,130 square metres of mixed employment use, including office, distribution, and manufacturing space.
- **Crewe Green Business Park, Crewe -** This is the largest business park in Crewe, it is over 27 hectares and accommodates employers such as Air Products, Busch GVT, Wulvern Housing and DEFRA. Crewe Green Business Park and Crewe Gates and Weston Rd Industrial areas are adjacent to each other and form together a diverse, influential and important area of economic activity.
- **Crewe Gates Industrial Estate, Crewe -** The largest industrial area within the largest town in Cheshire East. Employers located here include Expert Logistics, JTI UK, 20:20 Mobile and Bargain Booze Headquarters.
- **Waters Corporation, Wilmslow -** Waters Corporation have recently completed the construction of a mass spectrometry headquarters located at the 15 hectare Stamford Lodge site. This facility will provide employment to over 500 employees committed to the support and development of mass spectrometry systems. Waters is a world leader in this field of scientific innovation.
- **Sanofi/Aventis, Holmes Chapel -** Sanofi is a global integrated healthcare leader in the pharmaceutical industry. The site, prominently located on the edge of Holmes Chapel is a centre of excellence for the manufacture of inhalation products for the worldwide market.

11.26   Whilst the Local Plan Strategy seeks to retain these key employment areas, it also provides opportunities for further inward investment at other established locations such as Radway Green, Congleton Business Park, Radnor Park Trading Estate and others. The Local Plan Strategy also seeks to unlock major new employment sites including Basford East and West and other developments to meet both latent demand and future projected growth. A range of employment sites are allocated around Crewe and in the south of the Borough to facilitate economic growth and deliver the aspirations set out by 'All Change for Crewe: High Growth City'.

Key Evidence

1.   Employment Land Review
2.   Employment Monitoring

Tourism

11.27   Nationally, tourism generates £90 billion of direct spending, provides 1.36 million jobs and is the fifth or sixth biggest sector of the UK economy in most years. The visitor economy is an important contributor to businesses and communities in Cheshire East, bringing 13.2 million visitors to the Borough each year, generating around £700m a year for the local economy and employing about 10,000 people, with food and drink, accommodation and shopping accounting for most of these jobs [53]. The rich and varied natural and historic environment, and the beauty and character of the wider countryside, plays a vital role in the visitor economy of Cheshire East. These Borough-wide assets will be protected and where possible, enhanced to help drive the visitor economy as well as for their own sake. As part of the plan for growth it is important that the visitor economy is able to maximise its contribution to the economy, employment and quality of life of Cheshire East.

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53   STEAM Report 2010, Marketing Cheshire

Enterprise and Growth

Policy EG 4

Tourism

1. The Local Plan Strategy will protect and enhance the unique features of Cheshire East that attract visitors to the area, including their settings, whilst encouraging investment. This will be achieved through:

    i.   The protection of Cheshire East's tourist assets, such as Tatton Park, Quarry Bank Mill, Little Moreton Hall, Macclesfield Silk Museum, Jodrell Bank, the Peak District National Park (adjoining the plan area), Alderley Edge, the Gritstone Trail, Tegg's Nose Country Park, Sandstone Ridge and the waterways that support appropriate sustainable tourist related development;
    ii.   Protecting visitor attraction sites unless it can be proven that the use is no longer economically viable;
    iii. Promoting the enhancement and expansion of existing visitor attractions and tourist accommodation, and the provision of new visitor and tourism facilities, in sustainable and appropriate locations;
    iv.   Encouraging sustainable transport to tourist and cultural sites; and
    v.   Encouraging and promoting opportunities for new tourist attractions in the historic and natural environment in sustainable and appropriate locations.

2. Proposals for tourist development of an appropriate scale, including attractions and tourist accommodation, will be supported within the Principal Towns and Key Service Centres.
3. Proposals for tourist development outside the Principal Towns and Key Service Centres will be supported where:

    i.   Either:

        a.   They are located within a Local Service Centre; or
        b.   They are located within an existing or replacement building; or
        c.   There is evidence that the facilities are required in conjunction with a particular countryside attraction;

    ii.   And:

        a.   The scale, design and use of the proposal is compatible with its wider landscape or townscape setting and would not detract from the character or appearance of the area; and
        b.   It would not be detrimental to the amenities of residential areas; and
        c.   The proposals are served by adequate access and infrastructure; and
        d.   The site has access to local services and employment.

Justification

11.28   The National Planning Policy Framework states that Local Plans should *'support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside'*.

11.29   The National Planning Policy Framework supports this agenda through a range of policy directives to support:

Enterprise and Growth

- Sustainable rural tourism;
- Competitive town centres;
- Sustainable transport;
- High quality design;
- Inclusive communities;
- Enhancement of the natural environment; and
- Enjoyment of the historic environment.

11.30   Together these policies underpin the Cheshire East approach to sustainable tourism and our ambition is to maximise its contribution to the economy, employment and quality of life in Cheshire East.

11.31   The visitor economy covers a wide range of activities across a variety of themes and locations in Cheshire East. Attractions such as Tatton Park, Jodrell Bank and Little Moreton Hall may be considered visitor destinations in their own right; leisure based visits might cross the Borough over a variety of canal, cycle or public footpath networks; and culture and recreational activities may take visitors to parks and gardens, market towns, and festivals across the Borough.

11.32   Visits to and within the Borough generate economic activity, support jobs and industries. By maintaining and improving infrastructure associated with the visitor economy, including green infrastructure and improvements to the Right of Way Network, communities are better able to access active leisure opportunities and participate in the cultural and social life of the Borough.

11.33   Enabling residents and visitors to access, understand and engage with the heritage, landscape and cultural assets of the Borough promotes a sense of place and pride in communities that alongside an attractive cultural, recreational and leisure offer, can be effective in attracting highly skilled individuals and businesses to locate in the area and may contribute to long term prosperity, regeneration and support for services.

11.34   Whilst it is important to support our visitor economy, it is also important to protect those assets that make the Borough attractive to visitors including landscape, public realm and heritage. In particular, it is important to minimise the impact generated by tourism travel.

11.35   Planning has a key role to play in enabling and encouraging more of our 10.3 million day visitors to stay longer and spend more by:

- supporting the industry to increase the number of overnight stays;
- promoting good design in the built environment and public space;
- protecting the quality of natural and historic landscapes;
- improving the provision of arts and heritage; and
- enhancing the visitor experience through improvements to the public realm.

Key Evidence

1. Cheshire East Visitor Economy Strategy
2. Government Tourism Policy
3. Cheshire East Sustainable Communities Strategy
4. Cheshire East Economic Development Strategy
5. Cheshire East Local Economic Assessment
6. Cheshire East Local Transport Plan

Enterprise and Growth

Town Centres

11.36   The Council advocates a clear 'town centre first' approach for its Principal Towns and Key Service Centres. It is fully supportive of the Government's aims to promote the vitality and viability of town and other centres as important places for communities. They are a major focus for employment and drivers of economic growth.

11.37   Cheshire East is a Borough with a significant number of towns and villages, each with its own distinct identity and character and offering an individual experience. They are key drivers in Cheshire East's economic prosperity and the focus will be on the continued development of the centres as commercial, retail, visitor and leisure hubs.

Policy EG 5

Promoting a Town Centre First Approach to Retail and Commerce

1. The Council will support the following hierarchy of retail centres in Cheshire East:

   i.   The Principal Towns will be the main focus for high quality comparison retail, supported by a range of retail, service, leisure, tourism, office and other town centre-type uses, including residential.
   ii. In the Key Service Centres, there will be a focus on the improvement of the convenience and comparison retail offer, with the potential to strengthen and enhance the retail offer, where suitable, as well as diversification to other uses such as offices, services, leisure, cultural and residential, as appropriate.
   iii. In the Local Service Centres, there will be a focus on convenience and comparison retailing of an appropriate scale, plus opportunities for service uses and small-scale independent retailing of a function and character that meets the needs of the local community.
   iv. In the other settlements and rural areas of the Borough, there will be a focus on providing retail and services of appropriate scale and nature to meet the needs of the local community.

2. Town centres will be promoted as the primary location for main town centre uses including retail, leisure, cultural and office development.
3. The use of upper floors in town and other centres for non-retail uses will be supported, where appropriate.
4. The retention and enhancement of the Borough's markets will be encouraged.
5. Small parades of shops will be protected where they are important to the day-to-day needs of local communities.
6. Proposals that help develop the evening and night-time economy in the Principal Towns and Key Service Centres will be supported, where any negative impacts on amenity are addressed.
7. Proposals for main town centre uses should be located within the designated town centres or on other sites allocated for that particular type of development. Where there are no suitable sites available, edge-of-centre locations must be considered prior to out-of centre locations. Edge-of-centre and out-of-centre proposals will be considered where:

   i.   there is no significant adverse impact on the vitality and viability of the surrounding town centres; and
   ii. it is demonstrated that the tests outlined in current Government guidance can be satisfied.

Enterprise and Growth

Justification

11.38   The National Planning Policy Framework states that *'planning policies should be positive, promote competitive town centre environments and set out policies for the management and growth of centres over the plan period'.* It goes on to state that *'local planning authorities should:*

- *recognise town centres as the heart of their communities and pursue policies to support their viability and vitality;*
- *define a network and hierarchy of centres that is resilient to anticipated future economic changes;*
- *promote competitive town centres that provide customer choice and a diverse retail offer and which reflect the individuality of town centres;*
- *set policies for the consideration of proposals for main town centre uses which cannot be accommodated in or adjacent to town centres'.*

11.39   It is important to determine appropriate policies for retailing, focused on town centres, as they are often a central part of community identity and contain the shops, services, pubs, restaurants, leisure, entertainment and other facilities that people wish to access locally, as well as businesses, employment and homes. Town centres are generally accessible by a wide range of transport modes and provide the greatest opportunity for linked trips.

11.40   The Council has developed a retail hierarchy of centres based on the Determining Settlement Hierarchy Study. The Study looks at a range of factors to determine the role and function of the Borough's settlements and confirms their place in the hierarchy, which is made up of Principal Towns, Key Service Centres, Local Service Centres and other settlements. This approach defines where new development is best located in the Borough.

11.41   In order to fully meet the identified needs of the Borough, suitable sites for main town centre uses will be allocated in the Site Allocations and Development Policies Document.

11.42   Until they are reviewed, the existing boundaries and retail allocations will remain as they are in the 'saved' policies of the Congleton Borough Local Plan First Review, the Borough of Crewe & Nantwich Replacement Local Plan and the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan.

11.43   All town centre boundaries, Principal Shopping Areas and primary and secondary frontages will be defined in the Site Allocations and Development Policies Document, and shown on the Adopted Policies Map. Detailed policies defining which uses will be permitted in these locations will also be included in the Site Allocations and Development Policies Document.

11.44   The Council is keen to preserve and enhance the vitality and viability of its existing town centres. Therefore, it is important to make sure that proposals for town centre uses located outside of these town centres do not have a significant adverse impact on these existing centres. These impacts could include an increase in the number of vacant units and a reduction in turnover. More information on town centre impacts can be found in Government guidance, but the Council will apply the sequential test set out in paragraph 26 of the NPPF when determining retail applications with a floorspace in excess of 2500 square metres.

Key Evidence

1. Cheshire Retail Study
2. Town Centre Surveys
3. Retail monitoring
4. Determining the Settlement Hierarchy Study

Enterprise and Growth

12
Stronger Communities

12 Stronger Communities

12.1   Cheshire East is committed to meeting the needs of its local communities and providing the infrastructure, services and facilities required to create sustainable and stronger communities, whilst recognising that Cheshire East covers a large geographical area and contains a large number of towns and villages, each with its own local character and distinctiveness, which must be considered.

12.2   We also want to put local people at the heart of decision making for their community and provide them with the ability to identify and meet their own needs, embracing the spirit of localism.

12.3   The Local Plan Strategy will provide a significant number of new homes in all parts of the Borough, to 2030, to support economic growth and sustainable development. It will make sure that there is an appropriate mix of house types, sizes and tenures provided across the Borough.

12.4   The Council also faces challenges in enabling people of all ages to make provision for their own care needs wherever possible. Good housing is essential for achieving this aim. Housing should be readily adaptable in the face of changes in the circumstances of its occupiers. In addition, specific provision should be made to meet the diverse needs of the Borough. This can range from bespoke housing with an element of care, through to whole life housing, the obligation to build more bungalows and positive encouragement for dependent relative annexes.

12.5   The Local Plan Strategy will strive for a decent quality of life for all residents and will contribute to the achievement of equality and social inclusion. It will seek to reduce poverty and to enable older people to live independently for longer in order to achieve a better quality of life for all. It will seek to improve human health and achieve a high quality of life by maximising opportunities to access facilities and open space thereby encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle.

12.6   Cheshire East Council will work with infrastructure providers to make sure that the infrastructure required to support the community is provided, including: local health and social care facilities; leisure and community facilities; education; transport; broadband, mobile and other ICT connectivity; water; waste water; and energy.

Leisure

12.7   Leisure opportunities bring together members of a community who work, live and play within an area.

12.8   Leisure and sports facilities and green spaces such as parks and allotments can help to enhance everyone's life. Such provision is important for residents' social, mental and physical health and well-being and to the achievement of sustainable communities.

Policy SC 1

Leisure and Recreation

In order to provide appropriate leisure and recreational facilities for the communities of Cheshire East, the Council will:

1. Seek to protect and enhance existing leisure and recreation facilities, unless they are proven to be surplus to requirements or unless improved alternative provision, of similar or better quality, is to be made.
2. Support and promote the provision of better leisure, community and recreation facilities, where there is a need for such facilities, the proposed facilities are of a type and scale

appropriate to the size of the settlement, are accessible and support the objectives of the Local Plan Strategy. The Council will:

    i.   Encourage facilities that serve the Borough as a whole, and facilities that attract large numbers of people, to be located, where possible, within or adjoining Crewe or Macclesfield town centres;

    ii.   Require facilities serving Key Service Centres to be located in or adjacent to their town centre or highly accessible locations;

    iii. Require facilities intended to serve the everyday needs of a community or neighbourhood to be in or adjacent to the centres of Local Service Centres or other settlements; and

    iv. Encourage the development of shared service centres that combine public services, health and community functions in modern accessible buildings.

3.   Support proposals for facilities that would not be appropriate to be located in or adjacent to centres, provided they are highly accessible by a choice of transport, do not harm the character, amenity, or biodiversity value of the area, and satisfy the following criteria:

    i.   The proposal is a facility that:

        a.   supports a business use;

        b.   is appropriate in an employment area; or

        c.   supports an outdoor sports facility, education or related community / visitor facility; or

        d.   supports the visitor economy and is based on local cultural or existing visitor attractions.

4.   Work with agencies, services and businesses responsible for providing facilities to make sure that the needs and demands of communities are met.

5.   Make sure that appropriate developments contribute, through land assembly and financial contributions, to new or improved facilities where development will increase demand and / or there is a recognised shortage of local leisure, community and recreation facilities.[54]

Justification

12.9   The National Planning Policy Framework states that Local Planning Authorities should *'allocate a range of suitable sites to meet the scale and type of . . . leisure . . . development needed in town centres. It is important that needs for . . . leisure . . . are met in full'* and *'deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs'*. The policy covers indoor leisure, community and recreation facilities. Community halls for example can be a focus for indoor recreation such as bowls and exercise classes. Policy SE6 in the Sustainable Environment Chapter covers outdoor open space such as parks and allotments.

12.10   Major facilities that attract a large number of people should be sited in accessible locations, and the Council will encourage such facilities to be located within or adjoining the two principal towns of Crewe and Macclesfield, where this is possible. If this is not possible, other accessible locations include town centres. Smaller facilities should be located close to existing centres where possible, or close to the communities they are serving. Where sites are not available in centres, other accessible locations will be acceptable subject to their impact on surrounding uses. Accessibility is a critical issue for community facilities as they are used by all groups, including those without access to a car

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54   Further detail can be found in Policy SE6.

and those with restricted mobility. Young people and elderly persons can be disadvantaged in terms of accessibility to community facilities and therefore accessibility by public transport and safe pedestrian routes are essential.

12.11   Focusing major facilities in town centres not only ensures good standards of accessibility but also helps to ensure vibrant and viable town centres. Major out-of-town centre leisure facilities are not encouraged, however, it is accepted that some facilities serve a very local need or will only be viable in locations outside centres. Consequently, the policy seeks to ensure that their impact is not harmful to the surrounding area.

12.12   The Council will work with other agencies and the voluntary and private sectors, to secure more and better facilities through joint working. Shared centres where public health facilities, council offices, libraries, police and other services are in one building can be cost-effective and more convenient for the public and are, therefore, supported.

Key Evidence

1.   Cheshire Retail Study
2.   Open Spaces Assessment
3.   Green Space Strategy
4.   Playing Pitch Strategy
5.   Indoor Leisure Facilities Development Statement

Outdoor Sports Facilities

Policy SC 2

Outdoor Sports Facilities

In order to provide appropriate outdoor sports facilities for the communities of Cheshire East, the Council will:

1.   Protect existing outdoor sports facilities, unless:

Either:

i.   They are proven to be surplus to need[55]; or
ii.   Improved alternative provision will be created in a location well related to the functional requirements of the relocated use and its existing and future users.

And in all cases:

i.   The proposal would not result in the loss of an area important for its amenity or contribution to the character of the area in general; and

2.   Support new outdoor sports facilities where

i.   They are readily accessible by public transport, walking and cycling; and

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55   As identified in an adopted and up to date Needs Assessment

ii. The proposed facilities are of a type and scale appropriate to the size of the settlement; and

iii. Where they are listed in an action plan in any emerging or subsequently adopted Playing Pitch Strategy, subject to the criteria in the policy.

3. Make sure that major residential developments contribute, through land assembly and financial contributions, to new or improved sports facilities where development will increase demand and/or there is a recognised shortage.

Justification

12.13 Publicly accessible urban open space, play and sports facilities all have a vital role to play in helping to promote more healthy lifestyles.

12.14 The existing outdoor and built sports facilities of the Borough represent important assets serving the communities in which they are located and in some instances the wider area. This importance relates to their function and also the amenity value and the contribution these facilities make to providing green spaces within the area.

12.15 Any proposal affecting an outdoor sports facility will be judged in relation to any emerging or subsequently adopted Playing Pitch Strategy.

12.16 The type and scale of development appropriate to a settlement will depend upon a number of factors:

- The demand and supply factors in relation to the particular outdoor sports being catered for, for example, a combined sports facility catering for local football clubs in an area which may serve a wider area than the adjacent settlement;
- The classification of the settlement within the settlement hierarchy;
- The proximity of other settlements and facilities; and
- Accessibility and infrastructure considerations, for example, traffic impact.

12.17 In terms of the development of appropriate facilities, this will be determined through evidence from the Playing Pitch Strategy process, other work with the community and sports bodies, to determine a particular club or community's needs. The Council is expected to introduce the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and the balance between what monies are collected between Section 106 agreements (S106) and CIL will be part of this process. The level of contributions will be determined through the S106 and CIL setting agenda.

12.18 Policy SE6 in the Sustainable Environment Chapter covers all outdoor open space such as parks, allotments and playing fields; open space standards and contributions.

Key Evidence

1. Open Spaces Assessment
2. Green Space Strategy
3. Playing Pitch Strategy

Health and Well-Being

12.19 Health, well-being and safety are major issues on the local and national agenda, and are closely interrelated. Health is about more than access to medical treatment and services. It is about lifestyle, including routine exercise and fitness for all ages and interests. It is also about living in a

safe environment and feeling part of the community. The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment approach to addressing health issues includes these wider determinants of health and should be used to inform planning.

12.20   The planning system can play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating safe, healthy and inclusive communities.

Policy SC 3

Health and Well-being

The Council and its partners will create and safeguard opportunities for safe, healthy, fulfilling and active lifestyles by:

1.   Working in partnership with the health and social care providers to improve health across Cheshire East and reduce inequalities;
2.   Requiring Health Impact Assessments as part of the application process on all major development proposals and seeking contributions towards new or enhanced health and social care facilities from developers where development results in a shortfall or worsening of provision;
3.   Ensuring new developments provide opportunities for healthy living and improve health and well-being through the encouragement of walking and cycling, good housing design (including the minimisation of social isolation and creation of inclusive communities), access to services, sufficient open space and other green infrastructure, and sports facilities and opportunity for recreation and sound safety standards;
4.   Improving education and skills training and encouraging life-long learning;
5.   Protecting existing community infrastructure and ensuring the provision of a network of community facilities, providing essential public services together with private and voluntary sector facilities, to meet the needs of the local community;
6.   Ensuring all development is designed to create safe environments by:

    i.   Ensuring the natural surveillance of streets and public spaces;
    ii.   Providing convenient, well designed, all weather, safe access and movement routes for all;
    iii.   Promoting activity that is appropriate to the area, by encouraging a diversity of uses (where appropriate) to extend activity to ensure the safe use of spaces during the day and night;
    iv.   Encourage green spaces and play areas to be located away from main roads;
    v.   Creating a sense of ownership by providing a clear definition between public and private realm;
    vi.   Ensuring security measures are sympathetically incorporated into the design;
    vii.   Ensuring the layout and use of new developments are appropriate and compatible with an area. Any new open space should be well defined, flexible and purposeful; and
    viii.   Strongly encouraging the reuse of vacant and derelict buildings and spaces;

7.   Promoting the role of communal growing spaces including allotments, garden plots within developments, small scale agriculture and farmers' markets in providing access to healthy, affordable, locally produced food options.

Stronger Communities

Justification

12.21   The Health and Social Care Act 2012 places a duty upon local authorities to take such steps as it considers appropriate for improving the health of the people in its area.

12.22   One of the Core Principles of the National Planning Policy Framework states that planning should *'take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs'*.

12.23   Life expectancy in Cheshire East is higher than regional (North West) and the national (England) averages. Life expectancy at birth for females is 83.3 years, compared to 81.5 years in the North West and 82.9 years nationally. Life expectancy at birth for males is 80.1 years, compared to 77.4 in the North West and 78.9 nationally [56]. However, there are pockets of poor health: there is a gap of around 10 years in male life expectancy and nearly 15 years for female life expectancy between some of the local areas within Cheshire East[57].

12.24   Population projections produced by the Office for National Statistics and locally produced population forecasts produced for the Local Plan both suggest that the number of people aged 65 years and over will continue to increase, with those aged 85 years and over likely to increase at the fastest rate. This is partly due to increased longevity, but is also a consequence of the age structure of the population and in particular the ageing of the large number of people born during the post World War 2 baby boom.

12.25   Having timely and easy access to a range of health and social care services and community infrastructure is a key issue for local people and creating opportunities for healthier and more active lifestyles is part of evolving national policy. The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment highlights that *'adult participation in physical activity, as measured through sport and active recreation, in Cheshire East is generally similar to the national average, whilst activity rates are lowest in Crewe and Nantwich and highest in Macclesfield. Physical activity is important in childhood to support healthy growth and development, psychological well-being and social interaction. Obesity in childhood can lead to risks of coronary heart disease, strokes and poor mental health in later life, all causes of premature death. Across Cheshire East, 8.2 per cent of all children were obese in 2010 although this is less than the national average (9.6 per cent).'* [58]

12.26   Encouraging residents to live a healthy lifestyle involves the provision of facilities to encourage regular exercise, maximising the opportunities provided by the natural landscape of the Borough to improve their health. The Public Health Outcomes Framework for England (2013) sets the context for local areas to decide what public health interventions they will make. It sets out two overarching outcomes:

i.   Increased life expectancy; and
ii.   Reduced differences in life expectancy and healthy life expectancy between communities.

12.27   Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires local authorities to do all they reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder and stipulates that the prevention of crime and the enhancement of community safety are matters that a local planning authority should consider in its plans and decisions. Crime and the fear of crime have a great impact on quality of life and general well-being, meaning that designing high quality and safe developments is an important aspect of creating places where people want to live, work and play. A contributory factor to improving safety is to create and sustain a 'sense of place', where people take pride in their surroundings. It will also be important to ensure that new developments are designed to a high standard and incorporate the

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56   Life expectancy at birth and at age 65 by local areas in England and Wales, 2009-11, ONS. Crown Copyright
57   Source: Life Expectancy at Birth, Department for Health, August 2012
58   Cheshire East Council Child Poverty Needs Assessment 2011

Stronger Communities

key principles of good design as set out in 'By Design' (DETR 2000). The production of a Design and Access Statement is an important part of development proposals (see Policy SE1 Design). Developers should request Crime Impact Statements (CIS) from their relevant Police Crime Commissioner body (PCC) to assist with the completion of the 'safer communities' section of the Design and Access Statement.

12.28   Any future Cheshire East Council policy on Health Impact Assessments will set out when a HIA is required in relation to new development. This policy (SC3) will then be applied to new development in relation to Criterion 2.

Key Evidence

1. Ageing well in Cheshire East Programme - A Plan for People aged 50 and over (2012-2017)
2. Cheshire East Joint Strategic Needs Assessment: Population Projections, (2010)
3. Cheshire East Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2013 -2014)
4. Building for Life Assessments
5. Health Impact Assessment Policy

Residential Mix

12.29   A neighbourhood with a mix of housing tenures, types and sizes will be more able to meet the changing needs and aspirations of its residents, through changing life stages, household shapes and sizes or changes in income. Providing greater housing choice increases the opportunities for households to remain within their communities and promotes social equality and inclusion by easing geographical constraints on the search for appropriate homes.

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Policy SC 4

Residential Mix

1. New residential development should maintain, provide or contribute to a mix of housing tenures, types and sizes to help support the creation of mixed, balanced and inclusive communities. This could include Self Build and Key Worker Housing.
2. To meet the needs arising from the increasing longevity of the Borough's older residents, the Council will require developers to demonstrate how their proposal will be capable of meeting, and adapting to, the long term needs of this specific group of people. This would include the provision of Lifetime Homes and Bungalows and other measures to support Health and Wellbeing and independent living through new developments that recognise the needs of older people, those with dementia and other vulnerable people; this will include developing dementia-friendly communities.
3. Development proposals for accommodation designed specifically for the elderly and people who require specialist accommodation will be supported where there is a proven need; they are located within settlements; accessible by public transport; and within a reasonable walking distance of community facilities such as shops, medical services and public open space.

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Justification

12.30   The National Planning Policy Framework states that *'to deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities, local planning authorities should:*

- *plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community (such as, but not limited to, families with children, older people, people with disabilities, service families and people wishing to build their own homes);*
- *identify the size, type, tenure and range of housing that is required in particular locations, reflecting local demand'.*

12.31 In order to create mixed, balanced and inclusive communities, provision will need to be made for a variety of housing tenures, types and sizes. An appropriate mix of housing will need to be provided within individual developments, proportionate to the scale of development proposed. Smaller schemes will need to contribute to the mix of housing across the wider area. The mix of housing will be expected to include properties for key workers and for those who wish to self build; further details of how this will be taken into consideration will be set out in a Supplementary Planning Document and the Site Allocations and Development Policies Document.

12.32 Facilitating more balanced communities, comprising a range of ages, household types and incomes may also help achieve wider social policy goals, such as reducing concentrations of income poverty and social exclusion.

12.33 The Council will work in partnership, with developers and Registered Providers, to provide accommodation with a greater range of tenure options that is of good quality and better design, and meets Lifetime Homes standards, offering longevity and flexibility for the changing needs of ageing. Appropriate sites to meet this specific housing need will be identified within the Strategic Sites of the Local Plan Strategy and the Site Allocations and Policies Development Plan Document. The Council may also seek a proportion of the overall housing land target to be developed as bungalows or houses meeting Lifetime Homes for older person households.

12.34 In the interests of sustainability and to ensure that new housing provision is sited in the most appropriate location, the Council will require proposals for the elderly and/or specialist housing accommodation to be supported by evidence that there is a proven need for such accommodation.

12.35 The Council will encourage the completion of Building for Life Assessments to ensure high quality residential development that meets the needs of all.

Key Evidence

1. Strategic Housing Market Assessment
2. Ageing well in Cheshire East Programme - A Plan for People aged 50 and over (2012-2017)
3. Housing Statistics - Communities and Local Government Live Housing Statistics / Cheshire East Council Housing Statistics
4. Cheshire East Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2013-2014
5. Cheshire East Housing Strategy 2011-2016
6. Cheshire East Supported Housing Strategy[59]
7. Safer Places: The planning system and crime prevention

Affordable Homes

12.36 The policy seeks to address high levels of housing need whilst reflecting the economics of provision. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and viability studies have informed the approach.

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59   This document is a technical report which along with further work will feed into the production of a Supported Accommodation Strategy.

Policy SC 5

Affordable Homes

1. In residential developments affordable housing will be provided as follows:

    i.   In developments of 15 or more dwellings (or 0.4 hectares) in the Principal Towns and Key Service Centres at least 30% of all units are to be affordable;
    ii. In developments of three or more dwellings (or 0.2 hectares) in Local Service Centres and all other locations at least 30% of all units are to be affordable;
    iii. In future, where Cheshire East Council evidence, such as housing needs studies or housing market assessments, indicate a change in the Borough's housing need the above thresholds and percentage requirements may be varied;

2. Units provided shall remain affordable for future eligible households or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision;
3. The affordable homes provided must be of a tenure, size and type to help meet identified housing needs and contribute to the creation of mixed, balanced and inclusive communities where people can live independently longer;
4. Affordable homes should be dispersed throughout the site, unless there are specific circumstances or benefits that would warrant a different approach;
5. Market and affordable homes on sites should be indistinguishable and achieve the same high design quality. Affordable homes must also be built to comply with the Homes and Communities Agency's Design and Quality Standards April 2007 and achieve Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3[60];
6. The Council will seek to improve choice and increase supply of affordable homes to reflect that housing markets change over periods of time and therefore the products that are made available to help people access rented and other affordable housing need to change to meet these market conditions;
7. In exceptional circumstances, where scheme viability may be affected, developers will be expected to provide viability assessments to demonstrate alternative affordable housing provision[61]. The developer will be required to submit an open book viability assessment. In such cases, the Council will commission an independent review of the viability study, for which the developer will bear the cost. In cases where such alternative affordable housing provision is agreed there may be a requirement for the provision of 'overage' payments to be made. This will reflect the fact that the viability of a site will be agreed at a point in time and may need to be reviewed, at set point(s) in the future;
8. Affordable housing is required to be provided on-site, however, in exceptional circumstances, where it can be proven that on-site delivery is not possible, as a first alternative, off-site provision of affordable housing will be accepted; as a second alternative a financial contribution may be accepted, where justified, in lieu of on-site provision.

Justification

12.37   The National Planning Policy Framework states that where Local Authorities have identified that affordable housing is needed, they should *'set policies for meeting this need on site, unless off-site provision or a financial contribution of broadly equivalent value can be robustly justified and*

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60   If these standards required by the Homes and Communities Agency are varied at any time in the future then the affordable homes must comply with the revised standards required.
61   Alternative affordable housing provision could include lower provision or provision of alternative affordable housing tenures.

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the agreed approach contributes to the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities. Such policies should be sufficiently flexible to take account of changing market conditions over time'.

12.38   'Affordable housing' and 'Affordable homes' are considered to be that as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework.

12.39   A community's need for an appropriate balance and mix of housing, including the provision of affordable housing, is recognised at national level as a material consideration in determining planning applications for housing development. Government policy seeks to create sustainable communities that offer a wide range of housing types and tenures and are socially inclusive.

12.40   The Council is keen to enable people to live independently at all stages of their lives and to reduce cultures of dependency. The Council is also keen to enable people to buy a home of their own and promote wider home ownership. It also encourages families to grow and move into homes that match their current and future aspirations. There needs to be a wider choice of housing that can support people when they are older and allow them to remain independent for as much of their life as possible. Affordable housing is a means of achieving these goals; it can support broader home ownership through initiatives such as housing designed specifically for first time buyers and can allow families to grow through fixed discount and shared ownership housing. Securing housing at the right price supports a flexible and dynamic labour market and enhances the wider growth agenda. Housing that meets the needs of older people will be increasingly important as longevity improves; the right kind of Lifetime Homes housing, bungalows or directly supported housing promotes independence and reduces the need to fall back on the care system. Consequently, a good range of housing that meets local needs is vital to the overall strategy.

12.41   Although the Borough has a stock of good quality housing with relatively low vacancy rates, in many areas there is an imbalance in the type and tenure of available housing. There is a need to make sure that future housing development in Cheshire East helps to support economic growth by providing for a range of income groups. This includes housing for households seeking open market dwellings and those requiring affordable housing (including social rented, affordable rent, shared ownership housing, discounted housing for sale and increased diversity of options through intermediate tenures). Such an approach will help to maintain long-term community sustainability and enhance the quality of life for local residents.

12.42   The Strategic Housing Market Assessment identifies that (based on the Communities and Local Government housing needs assessment model presented in the Communities and Local Government Strategic Housing Market Assessment guidance), there is an annual net shortfall of 1,401 affordable homes. Due to the fact that there will not be sufficient supply-side opportunities through which this will be able to be addressed, this is not a target for delivery. This does, however, show that there is a clearly identified need for more affordable housing to meet local needs.

12.43   To help address housing need, the Council will seek affordable housing from residential developments in accordance with the stated thresholds.

12.44   All development involving the provision of housing that meets the thresholds will be required to make provision for affordable housing, unless there are exceptional viability circumstances which make this impossible. Land values used in any viability assessments will be expected to take account of planning obligations.

12.45   The Council will normally require the affordable housing to be delivered without public subsidy and provided on site. In exceptional circumstances and where it can be justified, as a first alternative, affordable housing will be accepted off-site; this must be on a site that is agreed with the Council as being in a suitable location, relative to the housing need to be met. In exceptional circumstances and where it can be justified, as a second alternative, a financial contribution will be accepted. Where a financial contribution is sought, the Council will seek to use a standard methodology which will be

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detailed in additional guidance and based on evidence such as the Strategic Housing Market Assessment, local housing needs surveys and other housing market studies.

12.46   The Council will seek the balance of housing that best meets local needs and the characteristics of the site. Currently, this is 65% affordable (or social) rent housing and 35% intermediate affordable housing. The Council may refine both the headline percentage, tenure split and any geographical variation as the Plan progresses. Any future requirements will be determined through evidence such as the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and local housing needs surveys.

12.47   Affordable housing requirements must also be balanced with other requirements for transport infrastructure, community facilities, open space and sustainable construction. However, it should be stressed that the provision of affordable housing will be additional to any requirements outlined in the Council's Charging Schedule under the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) - see Policy IN2 .

12.48   The Draft Core Strategy and CIL Viability assessment (2013) noted that greenfield residential development is generally viable at the current time at a 30% affordable housing requirement. The assessment acknowledges challenges, however, in respect of the viability of brownfield development in meeting the 30% requirement with particular issues around the urban area of Crewe. Point 7 of policy SC5 allows for the viability of schemes to be a key consideration in demonstrating an alternative affordable housing provision alongside an open book viability assessment, in order to consider schemes on a case by case basis.

12.49   In Crewe it may also be more appropriate to divert funding for affordable housing into provisions for the improvement of existing stock within the urban area, rather than the provision of new houses. This will not only make best use of available resources but have regeneration benefits as well.

12.50   Where viability assessments are submitted, to demonstrate that an alternative provision of affordable housing should be provided, they will be evaluated independently, such cost being borne by the developer. In cases where such alternative affordable housing provision is agreed, there may be a requirement for the provision of 'overage' payments to be made. As viability assessments are relevant to a particular point in time, this would be linked to reviews of the viability assessment, at certain points within the site's lifetime. Such a requirement will be related to the site's size; its characteristics; market conditions and other relevant factors.

12.51   Further explanation, regarding how this Policy and Policy SC6 'Rural Exceptions Housing for Local Needs' will operate, will be included in a Supplementary Planning Document on Affordable Housing.

Key Evidence

1.   Strategic Housing Market Assessment
2.   Local Housing Needs Surveys
3.   Cheshire East Housing Strategy

Rural Exceptions

12.52   Approximately 30% of Cheshire East's population live in Local Service Centres (LSCs), Other Settlements and rural areas. The provision of additional housing is vital to the creation and maintenance of sustainable communities in rural areas. Further supply is required to address the cost of housing, and to enable newly forming households to remain in their communities. Additional housing can also help to improve the viability of existing or potential local services.

Policy SC 6

Rural Exceptions Housing for Local Needs

Rural Exceptions affordable housing will be permitted as an exception to other policies concerning the countryside, to meet locally identified affordable housing need, subject to all of the following criteria being met:

1. Sites should adjoin Local Service Centres and Other Settlements and be close to existing employment and existing or proposed services and facilities, including public transport, educational and health facilities and retail services;
2. Proposals must be for small schemes; small schemes are considered to be those of 10 dwellings or fewer[62]. Any such developments must be appropriate in scale, design and character to the locality;
3. A thorough site options appraisal must be submitted to demonstrate why the site is the most suitable one. Such an appraisal must demonstrate why the need cannot be met within the settlement;
4. In all cases, proposals for rural exceptions housing schemes must be supported by an up-to-date[63] Housing Needs Survey[64] that identifies the need for such provision within the Parish;
5. Occupancy will, in perpetuity, be restricted to a person in housing need and resident or working in the relevant Parish, or who has other strong links with the relevant locality in line with the community connection criteria as set out by Cheshire Homechoice, both initially and on subsequent change of occupancy. This could include Key Workers and Self Build;
6. The locality to which the occupancy criteria are to be applied is taken as the Parish, unless otherwise agreed with Cheshire East Council;
7. To ensure that a property is let or sold to a person who either lives locally or has strong local connections in the future, the Council will expect there to be a 'cascade' approach to the locality issue appropriate to the type of tenure. Thus, first priority is to be given to those satisfying the occupancy criteria in relation to the Parish, widening in agreed geographical stages[65].

Cross Subsidy

8. Proposals must consist in their entirety of affordable housing that will be retained in perpetuity. In exceptional circumstances, proposals that intend to include an element of market housing, or plots for open market sale, may be acceptable, if they meet all of the above criteria, along with the criteria below:

    i. Such proposals will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the site would not be viable, as a rural exception site, without cross subsidy. The developer will be required to submit an open book viability assessment. In such cases, the Council will commission an independent review of the viability study, for which the developer will bear the cost;

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62 The scale of a Rural Exception site should broadly reflect the affordable housing need appropriate to the parish in which it is situated. The housing need identified in the local housing needs survey is an important factor, however, if a higher housing need is identified (greater than 10 dwellings), then it will be considered appropriate for development of more than one site to meet this need.
63 Within the last five years.
64 The Survey must be conducted in conjunction with the Parish Council and should be based on the Cheshire EC model survey.
65 Generally this is taken as the Parish and then Parish plus adjoining Parishes.

ii.   The Council will not accept aspirational land value as justification for allowing a higher proportion of market value units;

iii.   The assessment must show that the scale of the market housing component is essential for the successful delivery of the rural exception affordable housing scheme and that it is based on reasonable land values as a rural exception site and must not include an element of profit;

iv.   The majority of the development must be for rural exception affordable housing; and

v.   No additional subsidy is required for the scheme.

Justification

12.53   The National Planning Policy Framework states that in rural areas *'local planning authorities should be responsive to local circumstances and plan housing development to reflect local needs, particularly for affordable housing, including through rural exception sites where appropriate. Local planning authorities should in particular consider whether allowing some market housing would facilitate the provision of significant additional affordable housing to meet local needs'*.Whilst paragraph 89 states *'a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in Green Belt. Exceptions to this are: . . . and limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the Local Plan'*.

12.54   This policy allows for the allocation of, or granting of planning permission for, small sites comprising affordable housing to meet local needs as an exception to normal policies. The policy sets out the criteria against which such proposals will be evaluated and under what circumstances schemes solely for affordable housing may be permitted.

12.55   The Council recognises the particular difficulties in securing an adequate supply of housing for local needs in rural areas. Where it can be demonstrated that a proposed development will meet a particular locally generated need that cannot be accommodated in any other way, affordable housing will be allowed as an exception to normal policy.

12.56   A number of rural exception sites have been successfully delivered in Cheshire East. However, the delivery of such schemes can be slow and the Council is keen to facilitate a higher provision of affordable homes in rural areas in the future with a view to maintaining sustainable communities and meeting their specific needs. This includes the provision of housing for key workers such as those involved in health, education or emergency services. It is also recognised that Self Build could be a way of delivering affordable housing in rural areas.

12.57   The provision of small scale market development in conjunction with affordable units will help enable more development sites to come forward to meet local demand. The provision of a small number of market units will also help maintain communities where development would not otherwise occur. Such schemes will, however, only be permitted where viability assessments or some other clear reason demonstrates that this is the only way that affordable housing to meet local needs can be delivered on the site. The Council would expect such schemes to be developed with support from Parish Councils and the Rural Housing Strategy.

12.58   Strong links[66] are currently identified as those who:

• Currently live, or have lived, within the boundaries of the Parish or adjoining Parish and have done so for at least one of the last two years or three of the last five years.

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66   in line with the community connection criteria as set out by Cheshire Homechoice

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- Have immediate family (sibling, son, daughter, parent, step parent or adoptive parents) who are currently living within the boundaries of the Parish or adjoining Parish and have done so for at least five years.
- Have a permanent contract of employment within the Parish or adjoining Parish.

12.59 Further explanation, regarding how this Policy will operate, will be included in a Supplementary Planning Document on Affordable Housing.

Key Evidence

1. Strategic Housing Market Assessment
2. Local Housing Needs Assessments
3. Cheshire East Housing Strategy

Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

12.60 Many Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople wish to find and buy their own sites to develop and manage, but have often been unable to secure planning permission to do so. Others require space to rent for pitching caravans – usually on sites owned and run by a Local Authority. An increase in the number of approved sites will help to meet demand for affordable Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation. A more settled existence can benefit many members of these communities in terms of access to health and education services and employment, and can contribute to greater integration and social inclusion within local communities.

Policy SC 7

Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

1. Sites will be allocated or approved to meet the needs set out in the most recent Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA). Current evidence suggests there is a need within the Borough for:

    i. A transit site of between 5 and 10 pitches for Gypsy and Travellers;
    ii. 69 additional permanent residential pitches for Gypsy and Travellers; and
    iii. 12 additional plots for Travelling Showpeople in the period 2013 to 2028.

2. To ensure that proposals for Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showperson sites are sustainable and acceptable in terms of location and design, the following considerations will be taken into account:

    i. Proximity of the site to local services and facilities.
    ii. Access to public transport.
    iii. Safe pedestrian, cycle and vehicular access onto the site.
    iv. Appropriate pitch sizes.
    v. Adequate provision for parking, turning and servicing.
    vi. Adequate provision for storage and maintenance, particularly where needed for Travelling Showpeople.
    vii. Mix of accommodation types and tenures.

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viii. Impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
ix. Impact on the Green Belt[67].

3. There will be a presumption against the loss of existing permanent consented Gypsy, Traveller or Travelling Showpersons sites where this would exacerbate or result in an identified shortfall unless suitable replacement provision of equal or enhanced value are provided.

Justification

12.61 The Department of Communities and Local Government's Policy for Travellers states that *'Local planning authorities should set pitch targets for Gypsies and Travellers and plot targets for Travelling Showpeople which address the likely permanent and transit site accommodation needs of Travellers in their area, working collaboratively with neighbouring local planning authorities'*. It goes on to suggest that *'local planning authorities should ensure that Traveller sites are sustainable economically, socially and environmentally'*.

12.62 The latest count of Gypsy and Traveller caravans (January 2013) showed that there were 17 caravans on Local Authority or socially rented sites, 88 caravans on private sites (seven of which only have temporary consents) and 14 caravans on unauthorised encampments.

12.63 A Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment has been prepared on behalf of Cheshire East, Cheshire West, Halton Borough Council and Warrington Borough Council in January 2014. The following table breaks down the overall provision identified by the GTAA over 5 year periods up to 2028:

	2013 to 2018	2018-2023	2023-2028	Total
Gypsy and Traveller Residential Pitches [1]	32	17	20	69
Travelling Showperson Plots [2]	10	1	1	12

Table 12.1 Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showperson provision in Cheshire East in 5 Year Periods

1. the GTAA has assumed that all unauthorised sites, waiting list needs and sites with temporary planning permissions are addressed in the first 5 years. Any supply from undeveloped sites is assumed to be developed in the first 5 years. Household formation is apportioned over time.
2. The GTAA has assumed that all unauthorised yards, concealed households and in-migration are addressed in the first 5 years. Household formation is apportioned over time.

12.64 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments are prepared to reflect a 15 year time frame. Future reviews of this evidence will be used to determine need for additional provision beyond 2028.

12.65 Sites for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople will be allocated in the Site Allocations and Development Policies Development Plan Document.

Key Evidence

1. Cheshire Partnership Area Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation and Related Services Assessment
2. Count of Gypsy and Traveller Caravans (January 2013)

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67 Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople sites in the Green Belt are inappropriate development, Paragraph 14, Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, CLG, March 2012

13
Sustainable Environment

13 Sustainable Environment

13.1   The environment of Cheshire East is unusually rich and varied and its high quality, natural and man-made heritage is a key asset, attractive to both residents and visitors. The Local Plan Strategy will maintain and enhance this asset that makes a fundamental contribution to the quality of life in Cheshire East. Development provides opportunities to enhance and contribute to the quality of the environment.

13.2   This section sets out positive policies to ensure that development will protect and enhance Cheshire East's built and natural environment and will make sustainable use of resources. These policies take account of the contribution that an attractive environment can make to a successful economy and the well-being of local communities.

Figure 13.1 Environmental Assets in Cheshire East: Riverside, Nantwich; Sandbach Park, Sandbach; and the Silk Bridge, Macclesfield

Quality of Place

13.3   High quality design is not just about how a development looks but also whether it is successful in its context, whether it functions well, whether it is enduring and of high quality, and lastly, whether it contributes toward broader sustainability objectives. To deliver safe, secure, attractive and healthy places in which to live, work, visit and spend time, development should seek to improve the quality and appearance and biodiversity value of an area and the way it functions.

13.4   Achieving high quality design should be a key objective of all those involved in delivering sustainable development. Development should take the opportunities available to improve the quality and appearance of an area and the way it functions.

13.5   The NPPF places significant emphasis on achieving high quality design as part of delivering sustainable development, stating that *"The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people."*

13.6   The National Planning Policy Framework also states that *'Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions'.*

Policy SE 1

Design

Development proposals should make a positive contribution to their surroundings in terms of the following:

1. Sense of place

    i.   Ensuring design solutions achieve a sense of place by protecting and enhancing the quality, distinctiveness and character of settlements;
    ii.   Ensuring sensitivity of design in proximity to designated and local heritage assets and their settings;
    iii. Ensuring that places are designed around the needs and comfort of people and not vehicles, so that layout, street design and parking is in accordance with the principles set out in Policy CO1 and Manual for Streets;
    iv.   Ensuring that proposals are underpinned by character and design assessment commensurate with the scale and complexity of the development;
    v.   Encouraging innovative and creative design solutions that are appropriate to the local context; and
    vi.   Ensuring a high quality public realm that enhances conditions for pedestrians and cyclists and creates opportunities for social interaction.

2. Managing design quality

    i.   Ensuring for larger scale and more complex developments that design proposals have positively responded to the Design Review process[68];
    ii.   Ensuring for major developments that Masterplanning and Design Coding forms an integral part of the design process;
    iii. Ensuring that housing developments achieve Building for Life 12 (or as updated) standard; and
    iv.   Encouraging sustainable construction practices including the use of appropriate recycled and sustainable materials of high quality.

3. Sustainable urban, architectural and landscape design

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68   By local design review or by Places Matter

i. Encouraging the introduction of passive environmental design principles and climate change adaptation features in the orientation of buildings and spaces and detailed design;

ii. Encouraging sustainable modes of travel through appropriate design;

iii. Reducing energy and water usage through appropriate design;

iv. Encouraging the use of renewable/low carbon energy technology, as appropriate; and

v. Encouraging the use of green infrastructure.

4. Liveability / workability

i. Providing internal and external space standards for living environments as set out in national best practice standards including Lifetime Homes principles for future adaptability;

ii. Ensuring appropriate level of privacy for new and existing residential properties;

iii. Ensuring appropriate external storage;

iv. Ensuring a high quality internal and external working environment commensurate with the type and nature of business, particularly for new build development or conversions to office space;

v. Ensuring appropriate provision for waste storage allowing for its sustainable management; and

vi. Ensuring appropriate access for the mobility impaired or partially sighted.

5. Designing in safety

i. Ensuring high levels of passive surveillance of streets, spaces and parking including appropriate lighting;

ii. Incorporating Secured by Design principles, provided that these are adequately balanced against other design considerations and do not undermine the quality of the development; and

iii. Ensuring that site layout and design minimises the opportunity for crime.

Justification

13.7   Cheshire East has a unique character and sense of place and it is important that new development responds positively to it. High quality design should be the aim of all those involved in the development process and should be considered at the earliest possible stage. Development proposals should, therefore, consider the wider character in addition to that of the site and its immediate context, to ensure that it reinforces the area in which it is located. Where there is the opportunity to improve the area, the design should secure a positive new character, enhancing both its appearance and the way that it functions.

13.8   A genuinely sustainable form of development should be underpinned by sustainable urban, architectural and landscape design. Both outline and detailed proposals should demonstrate their performance in respect to sustainable design, commensurate with the type and scale of the application.

13.9   Development should have due regard to the site and wider setting in respect to layout, movement and connections, scale and height, landscape character, townscape character and in their appearance both in terms of architectural quality and materials. Development should also ensure high levels of passive surveillance of streets, spaces and parking through the arrangement and design of buildings, streets and spaces and the activity within them. Boundary treatments and hard surfaces are equally important to successful design.

13.10 In rural areas, particular attention should be paid to landscape character, the local vernacular and the peculiar characteristics of the locality. These will vary considerably within Cheshire East and new development should be designed with a distinctive sense of place in mind.

13.11 Consequently, it is important that new development has a strong design vision, formed early in the process, in order to create a strong sense of place and to fully address both the opportunities and constraints of the site and the wider area.

13.12 Proposals for new development should express how the design achieves this in the Design and Access Statement. This should not merely be a statement of what the proposal is or looks like but must set out the 'story' of the design (i.e. the design process that has been followed) and how it has evolved and strengthened. The design process can be summarised as:

- Stage 1: analysis: research and analyse the physical, environmental, economic and social considerations. Identify issues and opportunities, not just for the site but the wider area (extent dependent on the scale and complexity of the proposals);
- Stage 2: concepts: Establish the design vision, set out the principles and parameters and potentially several sketch options (depending on the nature and scale of the development)
- Potential stage for design review;
- Stage 3: Design development: test and refine the design, potentially including selecting a preferred approach (if several options have been developed in stage 2). Ironing out of issues highlighted and strengthening of the scheme;
- Potential stage for design review and/or consultation;
- Stage 4: final design: Final refinement and preparation of the final design and assembly of all supporting material including visual representations appropriate to the scale and type of application (potentially 2D and 3D).

13.13 Detailed design policies will be included in the Site Allocations and Development Policies document. This detail will be expanded upon by a Supplementary Planning Document on Design.

Key Evidence

1. Local Design Awards
2. Cheshire Landscape Character Assessment
3. Conservation Area Appraisals developed for Conservation Areas across Cheshire East
4. Village Design Statements

Policy SE 2

Efficient Use of Land

1. The Council will encourage the redevelopment / re-use of previously developed land.
2. The Council will manage development to protect previously developed land where it can be clearly demonstrated that either the landscape amenity or biodiversity value of the site has become of a high value and as such would be compromised through redevelopment of the site.
3. All windfall development should:

    i. Consider the landscape and townscape character of the surrounding area when determining the character and density of development;
    ii. Build upon existing concentrations of activities and existing infrastructure;

Sustainable Environment

iii. Not require major investment in new infrastructure, including transport, water supply and sewerage. Where this is unavoidable, development should be appropriately phased to coincide with new infrastructure provision; and

iv. Consider the consequences of the proposal for sustainable development having regard to Policy SD1 and Policy SD2

4. Development should safeguard natural resources including high quality agricultural land (grades 1, 2, and 3a), geology, minerals, air, soil and water.

Justification

13.14 The National Planning Policy Framework identifies the efficient use of land as one of the core land use planning principles which encourages *'the effective use of land by re-using land that has been previously developed (brownfield land), provided that it is not of high environmental value'*.

13.15 Not all areas of previously-developed land will however be suitable or appropriate for built development, nor for the whole curtilage to be developed. The Council will therefore seek to resist inappropriate development where development would cause harm to the character of the surrounding area. The Council recognises that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development in accordance with paragraph 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework. The Council will therefore seek to ensure that, where possible, development is making the best use of land and existing infrastructure, and that resources are being managed prudently and efficiently. It is not always possible to predict where sites and buildings will become available and therefore it is not always possible to allocate such sites for development. At the same time, the Council would like to see these sites brought back into use, not only in relation to the prudent use of resources but also to make sure that an area is not blighted by dereliction and vacancy, and to reduce opportunities for any criminal and anti-social activity to take place on the site. The Council recognises that good design is an important aspect of sustainable development and therefore when planning for any development, including windfall sites *'it is important to plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development, including individual buildings, public and private spaces and wider area development schemes'* (NPPF).

13.16 The NPPF states that "*Local planning authorities should take into account the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land*'". Cheshire is a major food producing county and fertile soil is a limited and finite resource that cannot easily be repaired or replicated. Accordingly whilst some reduction of agricultural land is inevitable if new development is to proceed, its loss should be minimised. The needs of future generations for all forms of development should be balanced against the inevitable requirement to provide food for future needs.

13.17 Cheshire East has a wealth of mineral resources; these must be worked where they are found (see policy SE10). The ability to access key minerals should be safeguarded.

Key Evidence

1. National Land Use Database
2. Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment

Biodiversity and Geodiversity

13.18 Cheshire East has a distinct natural environment that contributes to the creation of an attractive and successful place. The landscape of the Borough is dominated by the flat topography of the Cheshire Plain containing a number of meres, ponds and marshes; variety is provided as a result of

the closeness of the Peak District to the east and the Mid-Cheshire Ridge to the west. The natural environment of the Borough is diverse, supporting a variety of habitats, flora and fauna.

13.19   The natural environment is one of the Borough's greatest assets and is highly valued by residents and visitors alike. Protecting and enhancing the environment that makes Cheshire East special is a key aspiration of the Local Plan.

Policy SE 3

Biodiversity and Geodiversity

1. Areas of high biodiversity and geodiversity value will be protected and enhanced. Enhancement measures will include increasing the total area of valuable habitat in the Borough, and linking up existing areas of high value habitat to create 'ecological stepping stone sites', 'wildlife corridors' and 'Nature Improvements Areas'. Ecological networks and connectivity are vitally important in sustaining sites and addressing the impacts of climate change.

2. Development proposals which are likely to have a significant adverse impact on a site with one or more of the following national or international designations will not be permitted:

    i.   Special Protection Areas (SPAs)
    ii.   Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)
    iii.   Ramsar Sites
    iv.   Any potential Special Protection Areas (SPAs), candidate Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) or proposed Ramsar sites
    v.   Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
    vi.   Sites identified, or required, as compensatory measures for adverse effects on European sites, candidate Special Protection Areas, possible Special Areas of Conservation, and listed or proposed Ramsar sites
    vii.   The Peak District National Park
    viii.   National Nature Reserves

3. Development proposals which are likely to have a significant adverse impact on a site with one or more of the following local or regional designations, habitats or species will not be permitted except in exceptional circumstances where the reasons for the proposed development clearly outweigh the value of the ecological feature adversely affected and there are no appropriate alternatives:

    i.   Local Nature Reserves
    ii.   Sites of Biological Importance (SBI) or Local Wildlife Sites
    iii.   Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites (RIGGS)
    iv.   Designated Wildlife Corridors
    v.   Habitats and species within the Cheshire Biodiversity Action Plan
    vi.   Priority habitats and species within the UK Biodiversity Action Plan
    vii.   Habitats and species listed in respect of Section 41 of The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006
    viii.   Legally protected species
    ix.   Areas of Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland
    x.   Nature Improvement Areas

4. All development (including conversions and that on brownfield and greenfield sites) must aim to positively contribute to the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity and

geodiversity and should not negatively affect these interests. To ensure there are no residual adverse impacts resulting from a proposed development, where in exceptional circumstances the reasons for the proposed development clearly outweigh the value of the ecological feature adversely affected and there are no appropriate alternatives, the adverse impacts of the development must be proportionately addressed in accordance with the hierarchy of: mitigation, compensation and finally offsetting. When appropriate, conditions will be put in place to make sure appropriate monitoring is undertaken and make sure mitigation, compensation and offsetting is effective.

5. Development proposals that are likely to have a significant impact on a non-designated asset or a site valued by the local community identified in a Neighbourhood Plan or the Site Allocations and Development Policies documents will only be permitted where suitable mitigation and / or compensation is provided to address the adverse impacts of the proposed development.

Justification

13.20 The National Planning Policy Framework states that *'planning permission will be refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats including ancient woodland and the loss of aged veteran trees outside ancient woodland, unless the need for, and the benefits of, the development in that locality clearly outweighs the loss'.* It also states that *'to minimise impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity, planning policies should: plan for biodiversity at a landscape-scale...; identify and map components of the local ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites...; promote the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species populations...; and aim to prevent harm to geological conservation interests'.*

13.21 The National Planning Policy Framework also states that *'The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by . . . minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures'.*

13.22 The Natural Environment White Paper 'The Natural Choice: Securing the Value of Nature' states that *'We want to create a resilient and coherent ecological network at national and local levels across England….To make this happen, the Government will put in place a clear institutional framework to support nature restoration. This means: establishing Local Nature Partnerships….Creating new Nature Improvement Areas (NIAs) and strengthening support through the planning system'.*

13.23 Local Plan Strategy Policy SE3 seeks to make sure that there is no overall loss of biodiversity and geodiversity and seeks to utilise avoidance, mitigation, compensation and offsetting strategies to achieve this. Biodiversity offsetting is described in the Natural Environment White Paper 'The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature' as *'conservation activities designed to deliver biodiversity benefits in compensation for losses in a measurable way. Good developments incorporate biodiversity considerations in their design but are still likely to result in some biodiversity loss. One way to compensate for this loss is by offsetting: the developer secures compensatory habitat expansion or restoration elsewhere'.*

13.24 The level of biodiversity offsetting required could be determined by means of assessments undertaken in accordance with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) metric contained in Biodiversity Offsetting Pilots published in March 2012 as applied in the Defra offsetting pilot projects. Biodiversity offsetting could be delivered by developers in partnership with various partners including conservation organisations, local landowners and the Borough Council.

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13.25   The designation of international, national and local sites is an on-going process, therefore the above policy will equally apply to any sites selected or designated subsequently to the adoption of the Local Plan. Conversely, the policy will not apply to any site de-selected after the adoption of the Local Plan. Sites of Biological Importance are being resurveyed; they will then be designated as Local Wildlife Sites. At the time of producing this document, there are therefore sites that are designated as Sites of Biological Importance (which have yet to be resurveyed) and sites that are designated as Local Wildlife Sites (which have been resurveyed.)

13.26   Construction Management Plans, landscaping, green infrastructure and open space proposals should be submitted to the Council during the planning application process as part of sustainable development proposals for any sites in close proximity to European designated sites.

Key Evidence

1.   Cheshire East - Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Local Plan
2.   Cheshire Region Biodiversity Action Plan
3.   The Natural Environment White Paper 'The Natural Choice: Securing the Value of Nature'
4.   Natural England - Condition Surveys for Site of Special Scientific Interest (updated yearly)
5.   Natural England Wildlife Plans (2011)
6.   Natural England - Information on Environmental Designations (2012)
7.   Sites of Biological Importance / Local Wildlife Site Registry (on-going updates)

Landscape

13.27   Cheshire East has a rich and diverse landscape. To the east, the land rises from the Cheshire Plain into the Pennine foothills and the Derbyshire and Staffordshire boundaries. In the south east, it includes the southern part of the Sandstone Ridge that runs north-south from Frodsham to Whitchurch and the rolling landscape of the Shropshire boundary. The Plain itself consists of a mosaic of clay plain, heathland, meres and mosses, shallow river valleys – Weaver, Wheelock, Dane and Bollin, and salt related landscapes around Middlewich and Sandbach. Much of the Plain has a pastoral landscape of hedgerows, hedgerow trees and ponds, which provides an impression of a well wooded landscape, but in fact woodland cover is one of the lowest in England and many of the hedgerow trees are slowly disappearing from the landscape.

Policy SE 4

The Landscape

1.   The high quality of the built and natural environment is recognised as a significant characteristic of the Borough. All development should conserve the landscape character and quality and should where possible, enhance and effectively manage the historic, natural and man-made landscape features that contribute to local distinctiveness of both rural and urban landscapes.
2.   Development will be expected to:

    i.   Incorporate appropriate landscaping which reflects the character of the area through appropriate design and management;
    ii.   Where appropriate, provide suitable and appropriate mitigation for the restoration of damaged landscape areas;
    iii.   Preserve and promote local distinctiveness and diversity;
    iv.   Avoid the loss of habitats of significant landscape importance;
    v.   Protect and / or conserve the historical and ecological qualities of an area;

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3.   In Local Landscape Designation Areas, Cheshire East will seek to conserve and enhance the quality of the landscape and to protect it from development which is likely to have an adverse effect on its character and appearance and setting. Where development is considered to be acceptable in principle; measures will be sought to integrate it into the landscape character of the area by:

i.   Protecting, restoring and enhancing the character and appearance of the local area through suitable planting, landscape and / or woodland;

ii.   Proposals for the extensive development of land, making suitable provision for better public access to, and enjoyment of, the Local Landscape Designation Areas;

4.   Where development may affect a local or national[69] designation a full understanding of the context, characteristics and significance should be provided and informed by the Cheshire East Landscape Character Assessment, Historic Landscape Assessment and the Local Landscape Designation Study. In Local Landscape Designation Areas, Cheshire East will seek to conserve and enhance the quality of the landscape and to protect it from development which is likely to have an adverse effect on its character and appearance.

Justification

13.28   The conservation of the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside is a core planning principle in the NPPF and it is important to understand the characteristics of the local landscape and how development may affect it. Development should contribute to the enhancement of landscape character, both urban and rural and should also protect and manage the historic, natural features and characteristics that contribute to local distinctiveness.

13.29   The Cheshire East area is a significant landscape asset in the North West which is enjoyed and valued for, amongst other things, its ecological, recreational, agricultural, conservation and aesthetic aspects. This is reflected in both the quantity and quality of landscape designations which protect specific areas and in the high profile given to the environment in the Council's key objectives.

13.30   Landscape encompasses all outdoor space, from town centre pedestrian precincts, to the open countryside: all forms of development impact upon the landscape to some degree and this needs to be assessed to determine its significance, ensure development is designed to integrate into its setting and to identify possible mitigation (be they proposals for stables, householder applications, new residential development, business parks, new town centre buildings, public art, telecommunications masts, wind farms, nursing homes, nurseries, new retail, overhead power lines, new recreational landscapes such as golf courses and many others).

13.31   Whilst all of Cheshire East's landscapes are of value, some landscapes are also recognised as being of particular importance and have been identified as Local Landscape Designation areas; these areas sit within the framework of the Landscape Character Assessment. Criteria for defining the special qualities of these areas include: distinctiveness, perceptual character, landscape and scenic quality, natural character, cultural character and function. Further guidance and/or design advice will be published for areas of particular distinctiveness such as the Peak District Fringe and the Alderely Edge sandstone escarpment.

13.32   The impacts of proposed developments upon existing landscape and views of the surrounding area should be assessed as part of the planning process. This can include assessing the suitability of landscape schemes (often submitted as part of a planning application), and negotiating any improvements. With larger projects, for example mineral applications, this can involve a series of meetings and site visits with the applicant's planning consultants to provide advice.

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69   Refers to Peak District National Park

Key Evidence

1. Cheshire Landscape Character Assessment (2008)
2. Cheshire Historic Landscape Assessment (2008)
3. The Natural Environment White Paper 'The Natural Choice: Securing the Value of Nature' (2011)
4. Natural England - Information on Environmental Designations (2012)
5. The Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology - Ecosystem Approach (2011)
6. Landscape Assessment of Congleton Borough (1999)
7. Cheshire East Wind Turbine Sensitivity Study (2013)
8. Cheshire East Local Landscape Designation Areas Study (May 2013).

Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland

13.33   Woodland, trees and hedgerows within Cheshire East are important visual and ecological assets, which not only provide a significant contribution to the Borough's local distinctiveness but also play a role in mitigating and addressing climate change and supporting biodiversity.

Policy SE 5

Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland

Development proposals which are likely to result in the loss of, or threat to, the continued health and life expectancy of trees, hedgerows or woodlands (including veteran trees or ancient semi-natural woodland), that provide a significant contribution to the amenity, biodiversity, landscape character or historic character of the surrounding area, will not normally be permitted, except in exceptional circumstances where there are clear overriding reasons for allowing the development and there are no suitable alternatives. Where adverse impacts are unavoidable, such impacts must satisfactorily demonstrate significant environmental gain by appropriate mitigation, compensation or offsetting.

The Council will seek to ensure:

1. The sustainable management of trees,woodland and hedgerows including provision of new planting within the infrastructure of new development proposals to provide local distinctiveness within the landscape, enable climate adaptation resilience, and support biodiversity;
2. The planting and sustainable growth of large trees within new development as part of a structured landscape scheme in order to retain and improve tree canopy cover within the Borough as a whole.

Justification

13.34   The National Planning Policy Framework states that *'planning permission should be refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland and the loss of aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland, unless the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss'.*

13.35   'Trees in Townscape', a guidance document produced by the Trees and Design Action Group, states that '*trees make places work, look and feel better. As well as playing a role in climate proofing our neighbourhoods and supporting human health and environmental well-being, trees can also help to create conditions for economic success. With over 80 per cent of the UK's population living in*

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urban settings, trees in and around built-up areas – which many call the 'urban forest' – have become a key component of the infrastructure that makes places work, look and feel better'.

13.36   The Government's Forestry and Woodlands Policy Statement 2013 states that *'the protection of the UK's trees, woods and forests, especially ancient woodland is a top priority'* and *' new and better managed woodland also has a role in making our rural and urban landscapes more resilient to the effects of climate change'*

13.37   The UK Forestry Standard (UKFS) 2013 also sets out the Government's approach to sustainable forestry and helps inform planning decisions by summarising the legislation which affects trees and woodlands, clarifies the role of the Forestry Commission and LPAs in respect of woodlands, setting appropriate standards and sets appropriate standards for woodland management or creation when covered by planning legislation.

13.38   The UK National Ecosystem Assessment (UK NEA) provides an analysis of the UK's natural environment in terms of the benefits provided to society and continued economic prosperity. The Ecosystem approach encompasses social, economic and environmental factors that are interdependent with biodiversity and various benefits that trees and woodlands provide.

13.39   Trees and hedgerows are an important element of the landscapes and townscapes of the area, where they can make a valuable contribution to visual amenity. They may have historic importance, as part of wider designed landscapes or be keys to the history of the landscape by identifying former highways, settlements or field boundaries. They may also have ecological value, by providing habitats for legally protected and Biodiversity Action Plan species. It is essential that the presence of existing trees be considered at an early stage in the development process and that where appropriate, provision is made for new tree planting. Whilst trees can be seen as a constraint, with sympathetic design they can enhance a development.

13.40   Therefore development proposals which will result in the loss of trees or hedgerows that provide a significant contribution (including trees or woodlands subject of a Tree Preservation Order, hedgerows which are classed as 'important' under the Hedgerow Regulations, those classified as UK BAP Priority Habitat) will be discouraged.

13.41   The Council will encourage proposals which seek to increase the planting of woodland and hedgerows to introduce positive sustainable woodland management - particularly in urban areas and the urban fringe, where this will contribute to the enhancement of landscape character, amenity, recreation, health and welfare of residents, biodiversity, geological and historical conservation, ecosystem services, tourism and the economic regeneration of the Borough.

Key Evidence

1.   The Natural Environment White Paper 'The Natural Choice: Securing the Value of Nature'(2011)
2.   Natural England – Information on Environmental Designations (2012)
3.   The Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology – Ecosystem Approach (2011).
4.   UK Forestry Standard - The Governments Approach to Sustainable Forestry (Forestry Commission 2011
5.   Trees in the Townscape - A Guide for Decision Makers (Trees and Design Action Group November 2012)
6.   Government's Forestry and Woodlands Policy Statement (DEFRA/ Forestry Commission January 2013)

Green Infrastructure

13.42   Green Infrastructure is a network of multi-functional green spaces, urban and rural, which are capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities. Green Infrastructure has a potentially important role to play in mitigating the impacts of extreme weather events, particularly extended heat waves. In addition, Green Infrastructure helps support biodiversity and makes an important contribution to the quality of the environment. Access to beautiful and well-maintained green spaces such as parks and gardens, country parks and wildlife areas, supports both physical and mental health and well-being.

Policy SE 6

Green Infrastructure

Cheshire East aims to deliver a good quality, and accessible network of green spaces for people to enjoy, providing for healthy recreation and biodiversity and continuing to provide a range of social, economic and health benefits. This will be done by:

1. Linking the various assets of Cheshire East's unique landscape – its upland fringes, Cheshire Plain, lowland heath, parkland estates, rivers, canals and watercourses, valleys and cloughs, meres and mosses, trees and woodland and wildlife habitats and its distinctive towns and villages and their urban fringe.

    i.   This network of Green Infrastructure assets should be safeguarded, retained and enhanced through the development of green networks/wedges and corridors.
    ii.   Areas identified as having a shortage or opportunities for the provision of Green Infrastructure should be a particular focus for enhancement.
    iii. Any development should contribute to the creation of a good quality, integrated and accessible multi-functional network of green spaces.

2. Safeguarding Green Infrastructure assets to make sure that:

    i.   Development does not compromise their integrity or potential value;
    ii.   Developer contributions are secured wherever appropriate in order to improve their quality, use and multi-functionality; and
    iii. Opportunities to add to the Green Infrastructure network are maximised through partnership working.

3. Working with partners, to support the potential of Strategic Green Infrastructure Assets to contribute to the aims of the wider green infrastructure. The Strategic Green Infrastructure Assets[70] identified in Cheshire East are:

    i.   Weaver, Bollin, Dane and Wheelock river corridors including cloughs and floodplains
    ii.   Macclesfield, Shropshire Union (including the Llangollen and Middlewich branches) and Trent and Mersey canals
    iii. Meres and Mosses Natural Improvement Area and Local Natural Improvement Areas
    iv.   Heritage town parks and open spaces of historic and cultural importance
    v.   Public Rights of Way, cycle routes and greenways
    vi.   Country Parks and estate parklands
    vii. Peak Park Fringe

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70   Strategic Green Infrastructure assets are those assets that either provide or could provide wider Green Infrastructure benefits.

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viii. The Cloud, Congleton Edge and Mow Cop upland fringe

ix. Sandstone Ridge

x. The ecological network of habitats identified in Policy SE3

4. Strengthening the contribution that sport and playing fields, open space and recreation facilities make to Cheshire East's Green Infrastructure network by requiring all development to:

i. Protect and enhance existing open spaces and sport and recreation facilities;[71]

ii. Encourage multiple use and improvements to their quality;

iii. Provide adequate open space;

iv. Contribute to the provision of outdoor sports facilities in line with Policy SC2;

v. Create or add to the networks of multi-functional Green Infrastructure;

vi. Secure new provision to help address identified shortages in existing open space provision, both in quantity, quality and accessibility;

vii. Locate open space facilities in appropriate locations, preferably within developments; and

viii. Promote linkages between new development and surrounding recreational networks, communities and facilities.

Justification

13.43   The National Planning Policy Framework states that *'local planning authorities should set out a strategic approach in their Local Plans, planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure'*.

13.44   The wide variety of natural landscapes, biodiversity habitats, green spaces, rural areas and the network of footpaths and bridleways is seen as one of the reasons why Cheshire East is such an attractive place to live by local people. There are concerns amongst local people about potential loss of green spaces and other places important for outdoor recreation and natural beauty and biodiversity. The policy links with Policies SE3 'Biodiversity and Geodiversity', SE4 'The Landscape', SE5 'Trees Hedgerows and Woodlands' and SE7 'The Historic Environment' linking all the various green assets of Cheshire East from parks and gardens to woodland copses, hedges and ponds.

13.45   It is important to co-ordinate Green Infrastructure provision so that resources are used effectively. The Council's Green Space Strategy sets out the Green Infrastructure assets and the various partners involved in green space provision. It contains a vision, background evidence, recommendations and an action plan. The Council's Open Space Assessment adds further detail at town and village level.

13.46   Provision of multi-functional Green Infrastructure should create: places for outdoor relaxation and play; space and habitat for wildlife; opportunities to access nature; climate change adaptation; opportunities for environmental education; space for local food production; improved health and wellbeing; reduced air, water and noise pollution; green transport routes to promote walking and cycling; and improved quality of place. It can also play a major role in attracting economic growth and investment, increasing land and property benefits, promoting tourism, and increasing business productivity.

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71   To be Identified on the Site Allocations and Development Policies Adopted Policies Map, plus incidental open space and amenity areas too small to be shown. Until this time the existing open spaces and sport and recreation facilities identified in the Borough of Crewe and Nantwich Local Plan, Congleton Borough Local Plan First Review and the Macclesfield Borough Local Plan will remain in force

13.47 Appropriate restoration following mineral working can provide additional green infrastructure assets (See Policy SE10 'Sustainable Provision of Minerals').

13.48 In the Council's Green Space Strategy, the Open Space vision is to provide *'a network of clean, green, sustainable, attractive, well maintained, safe areas for all ages, for formal and informal recreational activities, more formal outdoor sports or for sitting and relaxing, which are easily accessible and are well designed to avoid conflict and build community cohesion, whilst enhancing our day to day environment'*.

13.49 Chapter 9 of the Green Space Strategy outlines Open Space Standards for the various types of open space.

13.50 The combined open space standards would give a total figure of 2.6 hectares of open space per 1,000 population plus developer contributions for outdoor sports provision – either enhancement of existing sites or towards the provision of new facilities. In some cases, commuted sums generally may be more appropriate for improvement of other open spaces and green infrastructure connectivity. The requirement per family dwelling would therefore range from 40m^2 per home comprising children's play and amenity green space – to 65m^2 per home comprising children's play, amenity, allotments and green connectivity plus a developer contribution for outdoor sports - in areas with severe shortages in open space. It is likely that the total amount of 65m^2 per home (plus developer contributions for outdoor sports) would be required on major greenfield and brownfield development sites, though the amount required would be influenced by other available evidence at that time. The Open Space Standards Table below shows the open space requirement per home and also shows the equivalent figure in hectares (per 1,000 population) that is used to assess the amount of open space in a particular neighbourhood / community.

	Children's Play Space	Amenity Green Space	Allotments	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Green Infrastructure Connectivity
Quantity (per 1,000 population)	0.8ha	0.8ha	0.2ha	**Developer Contribution**	0.8ha
Quantity (per family home)	20m^2	20m^2	5m^2	**Developer Contribution**	20m^2

Table 13.1 Open Space Standards

13.51 In some cases, commuted sums may be required for biodiversity offsetting/compensatory habitat expansion. Developments should incorporate biodiversity considerations in their design but there is still likely to be some biodiversity loss. One way to compensate for this loss is by offsetting: this includes the provision of compensatory habitat expansion or restoration on an alternative site.

13.52 Developer Contributions for Outdoor Sports facilities will be informed by any emerging or subsequently adopted Playing Pitch Strategy. The Playing Pitch Strategy will be prepared as per Sport England guidance. Policy SC2 covers the provision of Outdoor Sports Facilities.

13.53 Viability considerations will be taken into account with any development proposal especially when applying open space standards.

13.54 Paragraphs 76 and 77 of the National Planning Policy Framework consider Local Green Space designations and set out when they might be appropriate. Local Green Space designations proposed in Neighbourhood Plans can be considered at the Site Allocations stage.

Key Evidence

1. Green Infrastructure Framework for North East Wales, Cheshire and Wirral (2011)

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2.   Cheshire East Open Space Assessment (2012)
3.   Cheshire East Green Space Strategy (2013)
4.   Playing Pitch Strategy
5.   Green Infrastructure Action Plan for Crewe (2012)
6.   Green Infrastructure Partnership (2011
7.   Forestry Commission - Benefits of Green Infrastructure (2010)
8.   Natural England - Information on Environmental Designations (2012)

Historic Environment

13.55   Our historic environment is a finite resource and an integral part of the unique character and distinctiveness of Cheshire East. In essence, it helps shape our distinctive identity and contributes significantly to both the landscape and townscape qualities of the Borough.

13.56   Cheshire East's historic environment includes both visible and below ground archaeological heritage assets. Built heritage is not solely about physical or architectural character, but just as importantly, the technological, social and cultural significance of a building, feature or place, both to our community, but also to the nation as a whole. It is also important to maintain the integrity and setting of designated and un-designated heritage assets and the features they contain. Many of these heritage assets are vulnerable to change and are under pressure. Once damaged or removed, they are irreplaceable, to the detriment of both current and future generations. Consequently, it is important to the long term well-being of the Borough that there is positive stewardship of its built heritage and that its conservation and management are key priorities in the future place-shaping of Cheshire East.

13.57   The Council is committed to conserving the historic significance of the borough's heritage assets, their setting and the wider historic environment. Cheshire East's heritage is an essential component of its present and its future. A critical component to achieving a high-quality built environment is to ensure that the Borough's historic environment is sustainably managed, enhanced and protected, whilst supporting appropriate, sustainable development.

13.58   Once lost or altered, features of the historic environment cannot be replaced. It is important therefore that decision making is based on a full understanding of the significance of heritage assets affected by development, the impacts arising from those proposals and the wider public benefit arising from the proposed development.

Policy SE 7

The Historic Environment

1.   The character, quality and diversity of Cheshire East's historic environment will be conserved and enhanced. All new development should seek to make a positive contribution to the character of Cheshire East's historic and built environment, include the setting of assets and where appropriate, the wider historic environment.

2.   Proposals for development shall be assessed and the historic built environment actively managed in order to contribute to heritage values and local distinctiveness. Where a development proposal is likely to affect a designated heritage asset (including its setting) the significance of the heritage asset, including any contribution made by its setting, must be described and reported as part of the application.

3.   The Council will seek to avoid or minimise conflict between the conservation of a designated heritage asset and any aspect of a development proposal by:

    i.   Supporting development proposals that do not cause harm to, or which better reveal the significance of heritage assets.

ii.   Requiring development proposals that cause harm to, or loss of, a designated heritage asset and its significance, including its setting, to provide a clear and convincing justification as to why that harm is considered acceptable. Where that case cannot be demonstrated, proposals will not be supported.

iii.   Considering the level of harm in relation to the public benefits that may be gained by the proposal.

iv.   The use of appropriate legal agreements or planning obligations to secure the benefits arising from a development proposal where the loss, in whole or in part, of a heritage asset is accepted.

4.   The impact of a proposal on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be properly considered, as these are often equally valued by local communities. There should be a balanced consideration, weighing the direct and indirect impacts upon the asset and its setting, having regard to the scale of any harm or loss. The presumption should be that heritage assets should be retained and re-used wherever practicable and proposals that cannot demonstrate that the harm will be outweighed by the benefits of the development shall not be supported. Where loss or harm is outweighed by the benefits of development, appropriate mitigation and compensation measures will be required to ensure that there is no net loss of heritage value.

5.   In all heritage contexts, high quality design should be achieved. It should aim to avoid poorly executed pastiche design solutions and should foster innovation and creativity that is sensitive to the heritage context in terms of architectural design, detailing, scale, massing and use of materials.

6.   Cheshire East Council will seek to positively manage the historic built environment through engagement with landowners/asset owners and other organisations and by working with communities to ensure that heritage assets are protected, have appropriate viable uses, are maintained to a high standard and are secured and have a sustainable future for the benefit of future generations.

Justification

13.59   The National Planning Policy Framework states that *"local planning authorities should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. In doing so, they should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance".*

13.60   Cheshire East contains a much valued, varied and unique built heritage. This is a key contributor to the quality of life and economic attractiveness of the Borough and has a positive and important role to play in achieving a sustainable community in Cheshire East. The Council will expect new developments to respect and promote the distinctive local heritage of the area, including the historic silk industry in Macclesfield, the importance of the rail industry in Crewe and the distinctive qualities of towns and villages across the Borough.

13.61   Key assets include Macclesfield's silk and industrial heritage, Little Moreton Hall, Crewe's railway heritage, Tatton Park, Lyme Park, Quarry Bank Mill, Tegg's Nose Country Park, the canal network, historic towns and parts of the Peak District National Park, amongst others. Specific unique attractions include a wealth of Historic Parks and Gardens and the Lovell Telescope at Jodrell Bank. The area's Stately Homes and Historic Parks and Gardens are a particular feature of Cheshire East and pose particular challenges as well as opportunities. There are 76 Conservation Areas and 2,638 Listed Buildings including 47 Grade 1, and 179 Grade 2*, Listed Buildings.

Sustainable Environment

13.62   There is also a wealth of locally important heritage assets that are not formally designated, but which are equally valued and cherished by local communities, ranging from smaller assets such as boundary markers and railings, to larger buildings and structures, and historic landscapes, veteran trees and ancient woodlands. Much of this local heritage remains unrecorded and therefore it is essential that the impact of proposals upon these non-designated assets is also properly considered in assessing development proposals. The Council is, therefore, committed to protecting buildings, structures, townscape features of particular local interest and value, and cherished landmarks, which are not statutorily designated, including historic parklands.

13.63   The Borough also has a rich archaeological resource ranging from the prehistoric period to the Second World War, including sites such as the Bridestones Neolithic chambered tomb, the Roman and medieval saltworking remains of Middlewich, the Roman and waterlogged deposits of Nantwich the Saxon Sandbach Crosses, the site of the Civil War Battle of Nantwich and the defences of the former airfield at Cranage. It also has a diverse historic landscape character, ranging from medieval field systems to twentieth century fieldscapes.

13.64   In order to properly understand the nature, significance and physical extent of assets of archaeological interest, programmes of mitigation in the form of desk-based assessment, field evaluation, recording of the asset, minimising the impact through design modification, may be required. Retaining as much as possible of the character of surviving historic landscapes can enhance the local distinctiveness and attractiveness of new development.

13.65   Designated heritage assets are those that are recognised as having national heritage significance and/or benefiting from statutory protection and comprise:

- Conservation Areas
- Listed Buildings
- Scheduled Monuments
- Registered Parks and Gardens
- Registered Battlefields
- World Heritage Sites

13.66   Non-designated heritage assets are locally important heritage assets which often have a strong local affinity or association and comprise:

- Areas of Archaeological interest (including Areas of Archaeological Potential and Sites of Archaeological Importance)
- Buildings of local architectural or historic interest (Local List)
- Locally important assets not on the Local List
- Locally significant historic parks and gardens
- Other locally important heritage landscapes

13.67   Securing high quality design is very important to conserving, enhancing and enriching the unique heritage and local identity of the Borough. With respect to setting, and wider context, new developments should respect the local character, massing, and scale of the area.

13.68   Design innovation will be positively encouraged to create architecture that is clearly of today and the heritage of tomorrow, but which also marries with and responds to the wider historic context. Whilst poor quality, ill considered pastiche design will be discouraged, architecture that focuses on local traditions, character and craftsmanship will also be supported and encouraged. For both contemporary and traditional design solutions, a focus on achieving quality, sense of place and local distinctiveness will be essential in order to be supported in heritage sensitive contexts.

13.69 Cheshire East Council has a range of responsibilities and statutory powers to positively manage the historic environment. In order to safeguard and maximise the gain from the Borough's heritage assets, the Council will seek to use these measures appropriately and responsibly for the public benefit in order to conserve and enhance the Borough's historic environment. An increasingly important issue for the historic environment is the harm arising from heritage crime. As part of the management of the historic environment, the Council will seek to work with local communities and other partners to deliver the heritage crime programme in Cheshire East.

13.70 Monitoring and reviewing the status and condition of important heritage assets will be an important activity, particularly where there are known development pressures and/or they are assets being at risk, in particular on the Heritage at Risk Register.

Key Evidence

1. Conservation Area Appraisals developed for Conservation Areas across Cheshire East
2. Cheshire Historic Landscape Characterisation Assessment (2008)
3. Cheshire Historic Towns Survey (1997 - 2002)
4. Cheshire East Local List of Historic Buildings
5. The Cheshire Historic Environment Record (contains Sites of Archaeological Importance)
6. Nantwich Waterlogged Deposits Report No 3: Management Strategy for the Historic Environment and Archaeological Deposits (2010)

Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

13.71 The world's climate is in a period of warming. Scientists suggest *"there is an overwhelming scientific consensus that climate change is happening, and that it is primarily the result of human activity,'*[72] mainly through the combustion of fossil fuels that result in the release of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide.

13.72 Continued global warming will result in many changes to the environment, both locally and internationally. Anticipated changes include *'average global temperatures [rising] by up to 6°C by the end of this century. This is enough to make extreme weather events like floods and drought more frequent and increase global instability, conflict, public health-related deaths and migration of people to levels beyond any of our recent experience. Heat waves, droughts, and floods would affect the UK too'.*[73]

13.73 The social, environmental and economic costs of climate change could be huge if no global action is taken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Therefore, international, European and national legislation has been introduced to achieve a reduction of global carbon emissions in order to reduce the cause and effect of climate change.

13.74 The UK legislation on carbon dioxide emissions is contained in the UK Climate Change Act 2008. This commits the UK to:

- A 34% (potentially increasing to 42%) reduction of 1990 Carbon Dioxide levels by 2020
- An 80% reduction of 1990 Carbon Dioxide levels by 2050

13.75 The UK Government has also committed to increasing the percentage of energy generated from renewable resources. The Renewable Energy Directive 2009, states that '*by 2020, 15 per cent of energy should be generated from renewable resources'.*

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72   DECC, (2011), Carbon Plan
73   DECC, (2009), UK Low Carbon Transition Plan

Sustainable Environment

13.76 In order for Cheshire East to contribute to the achievement of these objectives, there is a need to introduce policies that encourage the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions and encourage the implementation of renewable and low carbon energy.

Policy SE 8

Renewable and Low Carbon Energy

1. The development of renewable and low carbon energy schemes (including community-led initiatives), together with any ancillary building(s) and infrastructure, will be positively supported and considered in the context of sustainable development and any impact on the landscape.

2. Weight will be given to the wider environmental, economic and social benefits arising from renewable and low carbon energy schemes, whilst considering the anticipated adverse impacts, individually and cumulatively upon:

    i.   The surrounding landscape including natural, built, historic and cultural assets and townscape; including buildings, features, habitats and species of national and local importance and adjoining land uses; and / or
    ii. Residential amenity including visual intrusion, air, dust, noise, odour, traffic generation, recreation and access; and / or
    iii. The operation of air traffic, radar systems, electromagnetic transmissions, and the Jodrell Bank Radio Telescope.

3. Appropriate mitigation measures to address any effects identified and considered (for all low carbon and renewable schemes) will be required prior to any development proceeding.

4. Given the nature of some forms of renewable and low carbon energy schemes and their supporting infrastructure and ancillary building(s), it will be necessary and appropriate in certain instances, to secure removal of the scheme and its supporting infrastructure and ancillary building(s) and restore the land to an appropriate use once a scheme is ready for decommissioning, through the imposition of planning conditions.

Justification

13.77 The National Planning Policy Framework states that the planning system should *'support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change, and encourage the re-use of existing resources, including conversion of existing buildings, and encourage the use of renewable resources (for example, by the development of renewable energy)'*. It also states that *'planning plays a key role in helping shape places to secure radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimising vulnerability and providing resilience to the impacts of climate change, and supporting the delivery of renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure. This is central to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development'*.

13.78 There are various sources of renewable and low carbon energy that can be applied in Cheshire East. It is anticipated that the following technologies will be the most viable and feasible:

*   Solar thermal and photovoltaics on south facing buildings throughout the Borough. Ground mounted schemes may be appropriate where they do not conflict with other policies of the plan

- Combined heat and power and district heating will play an important role, particularly in strategic and major employment, retail, residential, community and other developments where there are high energy demands
- Biomass boilers serving individual or groups of buildings and communal heat and power systems, particularly in rural communities
- Community led and farm scale anaerobic digestion
- Community led hydropower schemes provided that the impacts on the river environment and surrounding ecology are mitigated
- Heat pumps, particularly in locations not served by the gas network
- A potential supply of deep geothermal heat has been identified in the Borough, particularly at Crewe, that offers potential to generate renewable energy
- Advanced thermal treatments
- Wind turbines of small, medium and large scale
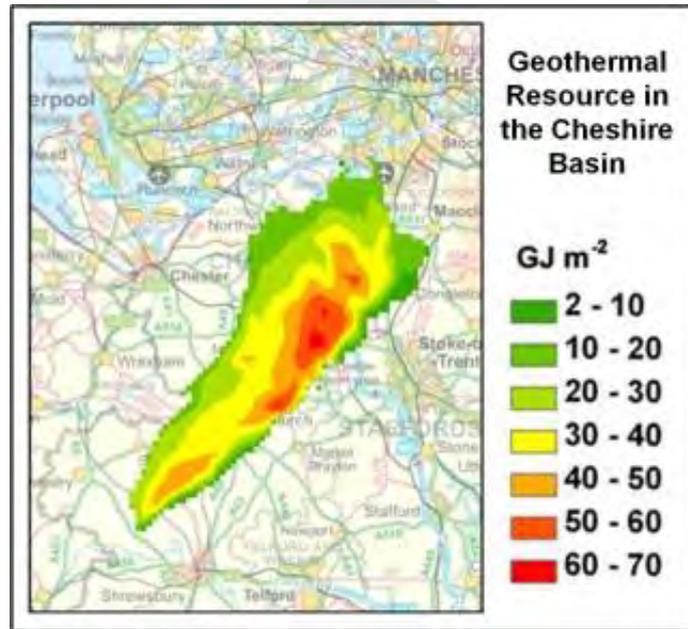
Figure 13.2 Geothermal Resource in the Cheshire Basin

13.79   Renewable and low carbon energy has the potential to contribute to the Borough's electricity supply. Assessments of wind speeds, technical and environmental constraints, as well as the potential landscape and visual impact studies of renewable and low carbon energy development across the Borough, should be used to help identify suitable locations appropriate for renewable and low carbon energy development.

13.80   Whilst the Council's evidence based studies makes reference to, and identifies potential locations suitable for renewable and low carbon technologies, it should not restrict development for technologies outside of the identified areas, or equally, mean that technologies will automatically be granted consent within the identified areas, or refused consent if outside the identified areas.

13.81   Given the rich and diverse nature of the landscape within the Borough, when planning applications are submitted for wind turbines, applicants will need to have completed the Appendix 2 requirements of the Cheshire East Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Energy Developments study (2013), as part of the application process. The Council will need to be satisfied that development will not have a significant adverse impact on the landscape.

Key Evidence

1.   Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Study
2.   Renewable Energy Policy Study
3.   Renewables Handbook
4.   Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Energy Developments Study

Sustainable Environment

Policy SE 9

Energy Efficient Development

1. The Council will look favourably upon development that follows the principles of the Energy Hierarchy, and seeks to achieve a high rating under schemes such as the Code for Sustainable Homes, BREEAM (for non-residential development), CEEQUAL (for public-realm development) Building for Life and/or Lifetime Homes, especially where the standard attained exceeds that required by the current Building Regulations (or as updated).

2. Where development is over ten dwellings (including conversions) or non-residential development over 1,000 square metres, it will be expected to secure at least 10 per cent of its predicted energy requirements from decentralised and renewable or low carbon sources, unless the applicant can clearly demonstrate that having regard to the type of development and its design, this is not feasible or viable.

3. In those areas identified as 'District Heating Network Priority Areas'[74] or within large scale development elsewhere, new development should contribute to the development of a strategic district heating network, where feasible and viable, by seeking to make use of available heat (including geothermal) and waste heat as follows:

   i. Large and mixed use developments of over 100 dwellings or non residential development of 10,000 square metres gross floor space should install a site-wide district heating network.

   ii. Smaller developments of 10 or more dwellings or non residential development of 1,000 square metres gross floor space should connect to any available district heating network.

4. Where a district heating network does not yet exist, applicants should demonstrate that the heating and cooling equipment installed is capable of connection to a network at a later date.

5. New development should be designed to maximise the ability to accommodate a district heating solution in terms of overall layout, phasing, mix of uses and density.

6. Development with high energy demands should give consideration to its potential role in providing an anchor load for a district heating network.

7. In those areas that are not connected to the gas network, new development will be encouraged to deliver its residual energy from low and zero carbon sources.

Justification

13.82 The National Planning Policy Framework states that *'to support the move to a low carbon future, local planning authorities should: plan for new development in locations and ways which reduce greenhouse gas emissions; actively support energy efficiency improvements to existing buildings; and when setting any local requirement for a building's sustainability, do so in a way consistent with the Government's zero carbon buildings policy and adopt nationally described standards'*. It also states that development should *'comply with adopted Local Plan policies on local requirements for decentralised energy supply unless it can be demonstrated by the applicant, having regard to the type of development involved and its design, that this is not feasible or viable; and take account of landform, layout, building orientation, massing and landscaping to minimise energy consumption'*.

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74   To be identified in the Site Allocations and Development Policies Development Plan Document
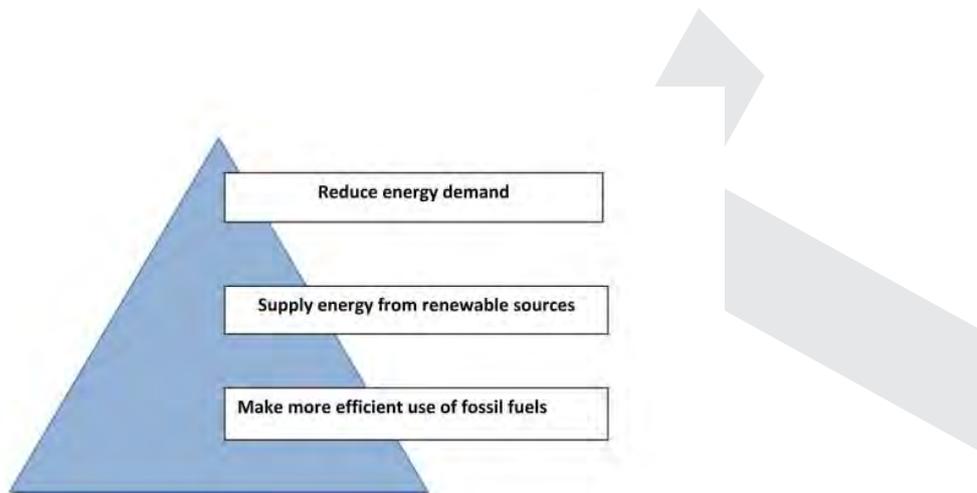
Figure 13.3 Energy Hierarchy

13.83 Cheshire East is relatively constrained in terms of its capacity to generate renewable energy, particularly from large scale technologies. Consequently, achieving national and local targets to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and increase renewable energy generation will be extremely challenging. Without a requirement for efficiency standards that exceed the requirements of Building Regulations on large sites, it would be unlikely to occur.

13.84 Cheshire East Council and Housing Associations will lead by example by seeking to maximise energy efficiency and by incorporating renewable energy generation through the refurbishment and redevelopment of land and buildings in their ownership.

13.85 This justification for the on-site low carbon energy target is drawn from the Cheshire East 'Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Planning Research' and the Zero Carbon Hub 'Carbon Compliance: Setting an Appropriate Limit for Zero Carbon New Homes – Findings and Recommendations, February 2011', which consider technical feasibility and financial viability. This approach is justified by the particular challenges and characteristics of the Borough. The target seeks to achieve a balance between the social, economic and environmental imperative of higher standards and the commercial realities of property developers. The Council recognises that this will in some cases remain a challenging target, particularly for certain building types, and so it will be acceptable to achieve average compliance across all buildings in a development.

13.86 Compliance with this requirement should be demonstrated through completion of the Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) which assesses the energy rating of development. This process is already required to demonstrate compliance with Part L of the Building Regulations. If viability is uncertain, applicants should use open book accounting to allow the determination of viability.

13.87 The purpose of the 'district heating network priority areas' is to prioritise district heating in areas where the potential is greatest and to take advantage of available heat sources such as geothermal or waste heat. The development of District Heating Networks to serve strategic developments and areas where there are major energy users are being explored. However, it is recognised that delivering District Heating Networks cannot be achieved though planning alone. The aim of this policy is to ensure that new development makes an appropriate contribution.

13.88 The design and layout of site-wide networks should be such as to enable future expansion into surrounding communities. Where appropriate, applicants may be required to provide land, buildings and/or equipment for an energy centre to serve existing or new development, irrespective of whether the scheme is currently in operation.

13.89 The viability of district heating schemes is heavily influenced by a development's density, mix of use, layout and phasing. Residential development should normally be at least 55 dwellings

Sustainable Environment

per hectare and a minimum size of 100 homes. Mixed use development can allow densities to be lower and can provide a good 'anchor' development (i.e. provides a high and stable heat load over the day and year). The cost of district heating pipes is high and so the layout of a development should seek to minimise the length of pipe needed. The on-site network should consider how it can be connected to a strategic network in future.

13.90   The Council is committed to encouraging households and businesses located in areas off the gas network to move away from heating systems powered by liquid gas, oil or electricity towards low and zero carbon technologies. Applications for new development in areas off the gas network will be expected to comply with this requirement. This will have economic benefits for the occupants as well as contributing to the achievement of national and local carbon dioxide and renewable energy targets.

13.91   Government targets in relation to greenhouse gas reduction are recognised to be challenging. Government and industry experts recognise that construction practice may be unable to keep pace with the ambitious targets imposed and from this the notion of 'Allowable Solutions' was created. These 'Allowable Solutions' are a way of providing flexibility for low and zero carbon development and are likely to be an identified set of on, off and near-site options or projects that will be used to offset the remaining greenhouse gas emissions of a proposal.

13.92   The proposed framework for zero carbon buildings policy including Allowable Solutions has yet to be fully confirmed by Government and is currently being developed at the national level. Cheshire East Council will align with the national prescribed scheme, once in place, or look to establish local mechanisms if the national scheme is not introduced as planned, to improve the viability of development under the zero carbon requirements. Money raised through allowable solutions, or its locally established alternative, will contribute towards the delivery of energy efficiency and greenhouse gas reduction priorities identified by Cheshire East Council. Further guidance on this will be given at site allocations stage following further national guidance on this matter expected from the Government.

Key Evidence

1.   Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Study (2011)
2.   Renewable Energy Policy Study (2010)
3.   Renewable Energy Handbook (2011)
4.   Local Energy Networks Project (2011)

Minerals

13.93   Minerals make an essential contribution to the nation's economy and quality of life providing the materials for infrastructure, buildings, energy and goods. Cheshire East contains a range of mineral resources of local and national economic importance. Minerals currently worked in the Borough include silica sand, sand and gravel, sandstone, salt and peat. Resources found but not worked include clay and coal with the potential for associated hydrocarbons.[75]

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75   BGS (2006) 'Mineral Resource Information in Support of National, Regional and Local Planning: Cheshire'

Sustainable Environment

Policy SE 10

Sustainable Provision of Minerals

Cheshire East will make provision for an adequate and steady supply of minerals in support of sustainable economic growth without unacceptable adverse impacts on the environment having considered the need to conserve finite natural resources as far as possible and safeguard them for future generations.

To achieve this, the Council will:

1. Make appropriate provision for the supply of aggregates having regard to Cheshire East's apportionment of sub-national supply guidelines and Local Aggregate Assessments.
2. Seek to maintain aggregate landbanks of at least 7 years sand and gravel and at least 10 years crushed rock supply over the Plan period.
3. Seek to provide stocks of permitted silica sand reserves equivalent to at least 10 years production at each site throughout the Plan period, or at least 15 years at sites where significant new investment is required.
4. Identify suitable locations for potential sand and gravel, silica sand and salt extraction in the Site Allocations and Development Policies Document. These will take the form of specific sites, preferred areas and/or areas of search where appropriate.
5. Encourage and support the provision and use of suitable alternative materials to land-won minerals in order to minimise the need for new primary extraction and conserve finite natural resources.
6. Safeguard Cheshire East's important mineral resources of silica sand, sand and gravel, sandstone (including building stone), salt and surface coal through the definition of Mineral Safeguarding Areas, which will be defined in the Site Allocations and Development Policies Document and will include environmental designations, urban areas and buffer zones, plus development management criteria. Within these areas, mineral resources will be protected from unnecessary sterilisation by other development.
7. Safeguard existing and potential minerals associated infrastructure against other development in close proximity which may potentially constrain its current or future use.
8. Support the extraction of natural building and roofing stone needed for architectural and heritage purposes where environmentally acceptable.
9. Not support proposals for peat extraction from new or extended sites.
10. Encourage and support the transportation of minerals by alternative methods to road where practicable.
11. Secure at the earliest opportunity the high standard restoration and aftercare of sites following mineral working, recognising the diversity of appropriate restoration schemes to deliver the potential for beneficial afteruses.
12. Recognise the need for the afteruse of underground salt cavities for gas storage purposes in response to national energy policy.
13. Set out environmental criteria in the Site Allocations and Development Policies Document against which all minerals proposals will be assessed to ensure operations do not have unacceptable adverse impacts on the natural and historic environment or on human health.

Justification

13.94   Aggregates are the essential raw material needed in almost any construction activity such as new housing and infrastructure. Cheshire East is a producer of sand and gravel and, to a small scale, crushed rock (sandstone) used for aggregate purposes. To meet the future demand for

Sustainable Environment

aggregates, supply levels set out in National and Sub-National Aggregate Guidelines have been apportioned between the Mineral Planning Authorities of the North West through agreement between the North West Aggregates Working Party. Table 13.2 sets out Cheshire East's contribution to sub-national supply and overall provision based on rolling forward annualised average apportionments over the plan period (2010-2030).

Aggregate	Cheshire East's Total Apportionment[76] (2005-2020)	Annualised Average Amount	Rolled forward over Plan period (2010-2030)	Additional provision to maintain landbanks beyond Plan period [77]	Overall provision	Less existing reserves [78]
Sand and Gravel	11.36	0.71	14.2	4.97	19.17	13.58
Crushed Rock	0.66	0.04	0.8	0.4	1.2	-3.09 (surplus)

Table 13.2 Cheshire East Aggregate Provision over the Plan Period (in million tonnes)

13.95   Levels of aggregate supply to meet demand will be reviewed when necessary following the publication of updated National and Sub-National Aggregate Guidelines. Local Aggregate Assessments (LAAs) will also be prepared annually to assess the supply and demand of aggregates in Cheshire East based on 10-year sales averages and other relevant information, identifying if any shortfall or surplus exists.

13.96   In order to provide security of aggregate supply, provision should be made to maintain minimum aggregate landbanks of at least 7 years sand and gravel and at least 10 years crushed rock supply throughout the Plan period. Landbanks will be used to monitor the security of aggregate supply from Cheshire East, indicating if a review of provision is needed, and as a consideration when assessing the need for new planning permissions.

13.97   Our evidence base tells us that there is a sufficient crushed rock aggregate landbank across permitted sites, but that additional sand and gravel reserves will be required within the period up to 2030 in order to maintain a landbank consistent with national policy. Provision for sand and gravel supply in Cheshire East will be made through the Site Allocations and Development Policies Document.

13.98   Silica sand resources in Cheshire East are recognised as being of national economic importance. In response to national planning policy, the Authority is, therefore, required to ensure that a steady and adequate supply of this raw material is provided. Due to the national need for silica sand, it is important that each production site is adequately provided for, unless exceptional circumstances prevail. Therefore a minimum stock of permitted reserves for at least 10 years production should be maintained at individual sites throughout the Plan period, or for at least 15 years at new or existing sites where significant new capital investment is required.[79] Silica sand quarries in Cheshire East also produce quantities of sand for sold aggregate purposes and, therefore, contribute to the overall supply and landbank of aggregate sand and gravel.

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78   5.59mt sand and gravel, 4.29mt crushed rock as of 31.12.2012
77   7 years sand and gravel, 10 years crushed rock
76   As detailed in NWAWP (2011) 'Sub-regional apportionment of 2005-2020 guidelines for aggregate provision in the North West' and CWaC (2011) 'The Future of Sub-Regional Apportionment in the Cheshire Sub-region - A paper prepared for Cheshire West and Chester and Cheshire East Councils'
79   Landbanks for industrial minerals are to be calculated according to paragraph 53 of the Technical Guidance to the National Planning Policy Framework.

Sustainable Environment

13.99   To enable the provision of a steady and adequate supply of both aggregate and industrial minerals, allocations in the form of specific sites, preferred areas and/or an area of search for potential future minerals development will be identified through the Site Allocations and Development Policies Document. This approach to allocations is considered to offer a level of certainty as to where potential mineral extraction may take place, whilst providing a degree of flexibility to meet needs over the plan period. This will involve reviewing existing allocations in the Cheshire Replacement Minerals Local Plan 1999. New allocations will be subject to necessary environmental assessment and sustainability appraisal. New sites, or extensions to existing sites for future peat extraction, will not be included consistent with national planning policy.

13.100   The consumption of primary (land-won) mineral resources can be offset by alternative materials such as secondary or recycled aggregates produced as industrial by-products or from construction, demolition and excavation (CD&E) waste. Whilst it is acknowledged not all primary minerals can feasibly be replaced, proposals offering to provide suitable alternative materials in appropriate locations should be supported in order to limit the need for land-won extraction and help to secure the long term conservation of finite natural resources. The Waste DPD will identify appropriate sites needed for the management of CD&E waste, including for aggregate recycling.
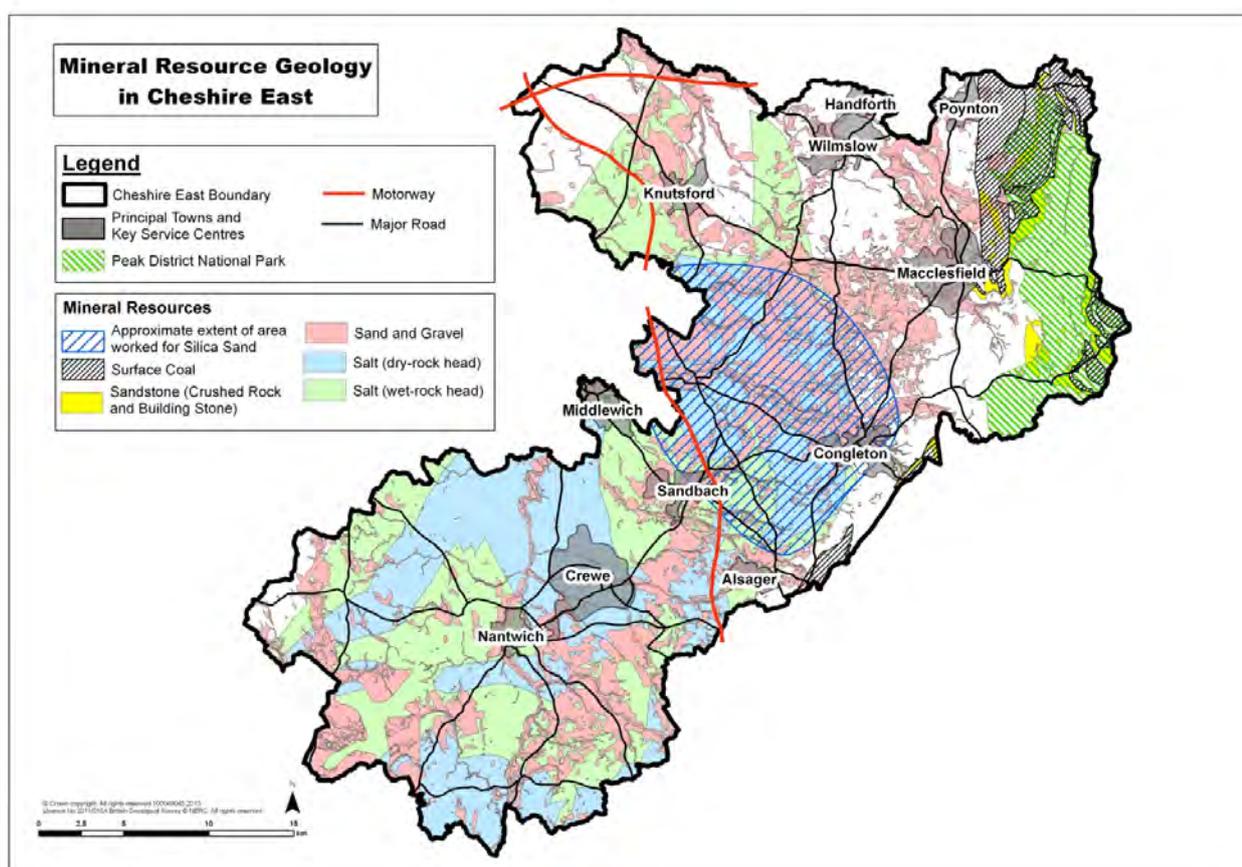
Figure 13.4 Mineral Resources in Cheshire East (based on BGS/Coal Authority data)

13.101   As mineral resources are finite and can only be worked where they naturally occur, in accordance with the principles of sustainable development, they should be safeguarded in order to meet the needs of future generations. Mineral resources considered for safeguarding in Cheshire East for their economic importance include:

- Silica (industrial) sand,
- Sand and gravel

- Sandstone (including for building stone purposes)
- Salt
- Surface coal

13.102   The broad extent of these resources is shown on the Mineral Resources in Cheshire East map (Figure 13.4). This is based on mineral resource data provided by the BGS and The Coal Authority. This data will provide the basis for the definition of Mineral Safeguarding Areas (MSAs) in the Site Allocations and Development Policies Document, subject to refinement through consultation with the minerals industry and others.

13.103   The purpose of MSAs is to prevent the needless sterilisation of mineral resources by alerting to their presence. This factor can then be given appropriate consideration in the planning process. MSAs do not preclude other (non-mineral) forms of development being permitted within them, nor do they carry any presumption that the mineral resource will be worked. Where it can be demonstrated that it is environmentally feasible and practicable, the prior extraction of the mineral resource will be encouraged ahead of necessary development.

13.104   In safeguarding sites for existing, planned and potential minerals associated infrastructure (as set out in the NPPF), including for secondary and recycled materials, appropriate consideration will also be given to the potential constraints that proximal (non-mineral) development may place on the operation of this infrastructure.

13.105   Cheshire East will work with the minerals industry and others to ensure that MSAs are based upon the best available information and that all relevant mineral associated infrastructure has been considered. Accompanying policy will be set out in the Site Allocations and Development Policies Document to support the practical implementation of determining proposals in these areas in line with best practice guidance.[80]

13.106   Cheshire East has a valued, varied and unique built heritage. The provision of locally-sourced building and roofing stone is therefore important to enable the repair and maintenance of built heritage assets in support of their long term conservation as well as ensuring sensitivity of design in proximity to designated and local heritage assets and their settings This complements the aims of Policy SE1 'Design' and Policy SE7 'The Historic Environment'.

13.107   Proposals for the extraction of peat at new or extended sites in Cheshire East, will not be supported, reflecting the national planning policy position on peat extraction.

13.108   Substantial environmental benefits can be achieved by replacing the road borne transportation of minerals with alternative methods such as rail, waterway, pipeline or conveyor. Whilst it is recognised that given the nature of mineral extraction in Cheshire East, road often presents the only feasible option, alternative methods will be encouraged and supported wherever this is practicable.

13.109   Mineral working is a temporary use of land, although it often takes place over long periods of time. The restoration and subsequent aftercare of mineral sites following the completion of extraction can provide opportunities to deliver a range of sustainable, positive and beneficial after-uses. This includes agriculture, forestry/native woodland, nature conservation, amenity and recreation. Restored land can also help adapt to or mitigate the effects of climate change and contribute to Cheshire East's network of Green Infrastructure, consistent with Policy SE6 'Green Infrastructure'. The most appropriate form of afteruse will be determined on a site-by-site basis.

13.110   Local geological circumstances in Cheshire East have demonstrated their feasibility for natural gas storage purposes in underground cavities, created following the extraction of salt (in brine)

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80   BGS and The Coal Authority (2011) 'Mineral Safeguarding in England: good practice advise'

Sustainable Environment

with the suggested potential for carbon storage. In response to national planning policy, encouragement should be given to such afteruse, subject to ensuring that the appropriate integrity and safety measures are satisfactorily secured. Government has identified the need for gas storage capacity to contribute to national energy security.

13.111 For all mineral development, it is essential that operations do not give rise to any unacceptable adverse impacts on the natural and historic environment or on human health. In addition to the relevant polices in this Plan, detailed policies will be brought forward through the Site Allocations and Development Policies Document setting out criteria against which all mineral related planning proposals, including for hydrocarbon resource development, will be assessed, consistent with national planning policy and guidance.

Key Evidence

1. Cheshire East Surface Mining Coal Resource Areas, The Coal Authority
2. The Future of Sub-Regional Apportionment in the Cheshire Sub-region - A paper prepared for Cheshire West and Chester and Cheshire East Councils, Cheshire West and Chester Council
3. Annual Monitoring Report 2013, North West Aggregates Working Party (NWAWP)
4. Local Aggregate Assessment (Draft) 2013, Cheshire East Council
5. Mineral Resource Information in Support of National, Regional and Local Planning: Cheshire, British Geological Survey (BGS)
6. National and regional guidelines for aggregates provision in England 2005-2020, Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)
7. Strategic Stone Study - A Building Stone Atlas of Cheshire, English Heritage
8. Sub-regional apportionment of 2005-2020 guidelines for aggregate provision in the North West, North West Aggregates Working Party (NWAWP)

Waste

13.112 The major streams of waste arising in the Borough include municipal or local authority collected (including household); commercial and industrial; construction, excavation and demolition; and hazardous. Waste management has changed significantly over the last twenty years in the UK with a major decrease in waste being disposed of to landfill and an increase in recycling - a trend experienced in Cheshire and Cheshire East. New technologies are also emerging to manage waste as a resource offering benefits such as energy generation.

13.113 A key aim of the Government is to move towards a 'zero waste economy'[81] in which material resources are re-used, recycled or recovered wherever possible, and only disposed of as the last option. To achieve this, waste must be managed according to the principles of the 'Waste Hierarchy'.

Policy SE 11

Sustainable Management of Waste

To achieve the sustainable management of waste in Cheshire East, the Council will:

1. Expect all proposals for waste management development to maximise opportunities for waste to be managed in accordance with the principles of the Waste Hierarchy whereby

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81   As set out in: DEFRA (2011) 'Government Review of Waste Policy in England 2011'

Sustainable Environment

priority will be given, in order, to its (i) prevention; (ii) preparation for re-use; (iii) recycling; (iv) other recovery; and (v) disposal.

2. Meet the predicted needs of Cheshire East through provision of sufficient opportunities for waste management facilities in appropriate locations, including for waste disposal. This will be achieved through the preparation of a Waste Development Plan Document (DPD). This Plan will:

   i. Identify sites and areas suitable for new or enhanced waste management facilities for the identified waste management needs of Cheshire East[82] over the Plan period.
   ii. Integrate with Cheshire East's municipal waste management strategy.
   iii. Set out policies to ensure that proposals for the management of waste do not endanger human health or cause environmental harm.

Justification

13.114   A key objective of sustainable development is to produce less waste and wherever possible use it as a resource. To deliver this, the management of waste must be driven up the 'Waste Hierarchy'[83] whereby options for management are prioritised in order according to their environmental impact. The most sustainable and environmentally friendly option is to reduce the amount of waste that is produced in the first place. When waste is created, priority is then given to preparing it for re-use, then to recycling (including composting), then to recovery (including energy generation), and last of all disposal (for example landfill).

13.115   Specific policies and the allocation of sites for waste development in Cheshire East will be set out in the Waste Development Plan Document (DPD). This will be prepared with regard to the Waste Management Plan for England and in consistency with national waste planning policy.[84] Production of the Waste DPD will follow the timetable outlined in the Local Development Scheme (LDS) to ensure the timely provision of new facilities .

13.116   The Waste DPD will identify and address the waste management needs of Cheshire East and plan for appropriate provision based on analysis of the best available waste data and appraisal of options. This will be based upon updated evidence on the authority's waste arisings (for all waste streams), its management capacity and on cross boundary waste flows both into and out of the authority area.

13.117   Sites and areas in the Borough suitable for new or enhanced waste management facilities will be identified consistent with criteria set out in national waste planning policy and, if necessary, safeguarded for this use. Recognition will be given to the benefits of co-locating waste management facilities and the potential for new technologies that use waste as a resource to help drive its management up the Waste Hierarchy.

13.118   The Waste DPD will also integrate with the Council's municipal waste strategy to ensure Cheshire East's waste is managed in the most sustainable way, reducing reliance on landfill.

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82   Including parts of the Borough in the Peak District National Park
83   A legislative requirement under Article 4 of the revised EU Waste Framework (Directive 2008/98/EC) transposed through the Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2011
84   The National Planning Policy Framework does not contain specific waste policies. Updated national waste planning policy, when finalised, will be published as part of the Waste Management Plan for England replacing the existing national waste planning policy contained in Planning Policy Statement 10 (PPS10): Planning for Sustainable Waste Management

Sustainable Environment

13.119   Policy will be set to ensure that the environment and human health is protected through the prevention or mitigation of the adverse impacts of the generation and management of waste, complementing other relevant policies in the Local Plan.

13.120   It is recognised that waste management is strategic in nature and that movements of materials cross administrative boundaries. Preparation of the Waste DPD will involve engaging with other relevant Waste Planning Authorities to address any issues of cross boundary waste movements based on the evidence available.

Key Evidence

1.   Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester Councils - Waste Needs Assessment Report, Urban Mines (2011)
2.   Cheshire Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy 2007-2020, Cheshire Waste Partnership

Pollution

13.121   The Local Plan plays a key role in determining the location of development that may give rise to pollution, either directly or indirectly, and in ensuring that other uses and development are not, as far as possible, affected by major existing or potential sources of pollution. Development should avoid and, if necessary, mitigate against environmental impacts.

Policy SE 12

Pollution, Land Contamination and Land Instability

1.   The Council will seek to ensure all development is located and designed so as not to result in a harmful or cumulative impact upon air quality, surface water and groundwater, noise, smell, dust, vibration, soil contamination, light pollution or any other pollution which would unacceptably affect the natural and built environment, or detrimentally affect amenity or cause harm. Developers will be expected to minimise, and mitigate the effects of possible pollution arising from the development itself, or as a result of the development (including additional traffic) during both the construction and the life of the development. Where adequate mitigation cannot be provided, development will not normally be permitted.

2.   Development for new housing or other environmentally sensitive development will not normally be permitted where existing air pollution, soil contamination, noise, smell, dust, vibration, light or other pollution levels are unacceptable and there is no reasonable prospect that these can be mitigated against.

3.   Development should support improvements to air quality, not contradict the Air Quality Strategy or Air Quality Action Plan and seek to promote sustainable transport policies.

4.   Where a proposal may affect or be affected by contamination or land instability (including natural dissolution and/or brine pumping related subsidence), at the planning application stage, developers will be required to provide a report which investigates the extent of the contamination or stability issues and the possible affect it may have on the development and its future users, the natural and built environment. This report should be written in line with best practice guidance.

5.   In most cases, development will only be deemed acceptable where it can be demonstrated that any contamination or land instability issues can be appropriately mitigated against and remediated, if necessary.

Sustainable Environment

13.122   The National Planning Policy Framework states that the planning system should *'prevent both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability'*; as well as '*remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate'*

13.123   The Council strongly supports the need to protect the environment and residents from the effects of pollution. Some types of development may cause or contribute to air quality, water or land pollution. The Council will therefore seek to make sure that levels are kept to a minimum through the construction phase and life of the development, and are not detrimental to human health, the environment or the amenity of neighbouring or nearby users, or the users of the development itself.

13.124   Paragraph 124 of the NPPF requires that planning policies should sustain compliance with, and contribute towards, EU Limit values or national objectives for pollutants, taking account of the presence of Air Quality Management Areas and the cumulative impacts on air quality for individual sites in local areas. Planning decisions should ensure new development in (or which may affect) an Air Quality Management Area is consistent with the current Cheshire East Air Quality Action Plan.

13.125   One approach to dealing with the cumulative impact of developments is through the preparation of a low emissions strategy designed to accelerate the uptake of low emissions fuels and technologies in and around development sites. Cheshire East Council is currently in the process of producing a low emission strategy for the Borough.

13.126   Noise and vibration can lead to harm or be detrimental to amenity. Whilst planning cannot control the noise or vibration from existing established development, it can try to ensure that new noise sensitive development is not close to existing sources which generate noise, such as industrial uses, noise created by vehicles and other forms of transport or even evening uses such as hot food takeaways. This policy will seek to ensure development is planned appropriately, so new developments which have the potential to create noise are not located in places where they would unacceptably affect the natural and built environment, or detrimentally affect amenity or cause harm.

13.127   Noise and vibration during the construction process can often cause disturbance and detrimentally affect amenity to occupants of neighbouring properties. The Council will, where necessary, seek to attach planning conditions assessing each case on its individual merits.

13.128   Lighting is an important part of 'everyday life' as it can be used to improve the appearance and character of an area/building, as a security feature and a way in which uses can be extended for longer periods of time (into the evening hours) thereby causing potential noise issues. The Council is aware of the increasing issues arising from artificial lighting, which can often impact upon residential amenity, the character and appearance of an area (particularly rural locations) and the environment. Aspects such as poor design, location, the expel of unnecessarily high levels of light can have a harmful impact. In addition, lighting left on unnecessarily is a waste of energy.

13.129   Whilst not all forms of lighting require planning permission, the Council will, where appropriate, seek to influence light pollution that would have a harmful impact upon the natural/built environment and amenity.

13.130   Contamination is not always restricted to previously developed land, it can be located on greenfield land and can arise from natural sources as well as from human activities. Development on land which is known or suspected to be contaminated, or for uses which would be particularly vulnerable in terms of exposure to contamination (such as housing or schools), must be supported by sufficient information to enable the possible contamination risks to be fully assessed. It is essential that measures are then put in place which allows the development to go ahead safely.

Sustainable Environment

13.131   Natural conditions such as landslides (due to geology, angle of land), soluble rocks or mining activities such as coal mining or subsidence caused by brine pumping[85] can cause land instability. Guidance on areas affected by brine pumping is available as part of the pre-application advice process (generally, this issue affects Middlewich, Sandbach and North Cheshire). Specific conditions may need to be applied to address the impact of ground instability in these areas. Development on land which would be affected by, or would affect land stability must therefore be accompanied by a report which identifies the risk. Development on land where instability cannot be mitigated and remediated will not normally be allowed.

13.132   The Council will seek the advice of the appropriate regulatory/statutory organisations including the Environment Agency, Health and Safety Executive, Manchester Airport, The Coal Authority and The Cheshire Brine Subsidence Compensation Board on proposals falling within defined consultation zones. There are a number of installations and pipelines in the Borough handling notifiable substances and the Proposals Map will indicate consultation zones appropriate to their uses.

13.133   Further guidance on the above will be provided in subsequent planning policy or Supplementary Planning Documents.

Key Evidence

1.   Cheshire East Air Quality Strategy
2.   Cheshire East Air Quality Management Areas and their resultant assessments
3.   Cheshire East Air Quality Action Plan
4.   Cheshire East Annual Air Quality Progress Reports
5.   Cheshire East Contaminated Land Strategy
6.   Environmental Noise Directive - Noise Action Plans (various for Air, Road, Agglomerations)
7.   Cheshire Planning Noise Guidelines (Part 1: Mineral and Waste Disposal) (1996)
8.   Noise Pollution: Construction Noise Leaflet
9.   Cheshire Brine Pumping (Compensation for Subsidence) Act, 1952

Flood Risk and Water Management

13.134   In recent years, floods have shown how vulnerable the UK is to extreme weather events, resulting in significant economic, social and environmental cost. Whilst Cheshire East may not have experienced devastating fluvial or surface water flood events as seen in 2007, 2009, 2012 and 2014, the number and severity of recent floods seems to be on the increase and climate change means that the frequency, pattern and severity of flooding are expected to increase.

13.135   Effective land use management has become one of the most important ways to manage flood risks and improve community resilience. Sustainable development in the right locations can help reduce the quantity of water entering our river and drainage networks, improve water quality within the Borough and provide opportunities to enhance biodiversity, health and recreation.

13.136   The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and its supporting Technical Guidance sets out the approach that Local Planning Authorities and developers should follow in considering flood risk, including a hierarchy of flood risk assessment documents.

13.137   Cheshire East Council as a Local Planning Authority is required to undertake a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) to identify areas at risk of flooding from all sources. For Cheshire East, this is flooding from rivers (fluvial), canals and reservoirs, groundwater, surface water and

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85   There is a statutory duty under the Cheshire Brine Pumping (Compensation for Subsidence) Act, 1952 to consult with the Cheshire Brine Subsidence Compensation Board for all development within certain prescribed consultation areas

Sustainable Environment

sewers, and the implications of climate change. The SFRA will then in turn inform the Local Plan Strategy.

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Policy SE 13

Flood Risk and Water Management

Developments must integrate measures for sustainable water management to reduce flood risk, avoid an adverse impact on water quality and quantity within the Borough and provide opportunities to enhance biodiversity, health and recreation, in line with national guidance, by ensuring that:

1. All development follows the sequential approach to determining the suitability of land for development, direct new development to areas at lowest risk of flooding and where necessary apply the exception test; this should take into account all sources of flooding identified in the Cheshire East SFRA.
2. All planning applications for development at risk of flooding are supported by an appropriate Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) to demonstrate that development proposals will not increase flood risk on site or elsewhere and opportunities to reduce the risk of flooding are sought, taking into account the impacts of Climate Change in line with the Cheshire East SFRA. New development will be required to include or contribute to flood mitigation, compensation and / or protection measures, where necessary, to manage flood risk associated with or caused by the development.
3. New development is designed to be safe, taking into account the lifetime of the development, and the need to adapt to climate change.
4. All developments, including changes to existing buildings, seeks improvements to the current surface water drainage network and be designed to manage surface water. This should include appropriate sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) and Green Infrastructure to store, convey and treat surface water prior to discharge with the aim of achieving a reduction in the existing runoff rate, but must not result in an increase in runoff. It is not sustainable to dispose of surface water via the public sewer systems; applicants seeking to drain to the public sewers must demonstrate there are no other more sustainable viable options. Where appropriate, opportunities to open existing culverts should be identified.
5. Where water infrastructure capacity is an issue, all major development must demonstrate that there is adequate infrastructure in place to serve the development.
6. New development enhances and protects water quality and complies with the Water Framework Directive in ensuring that development does not cause a deterioration in the status of inland waters, unless suitable mitigation measures are in place; and
7. New development incorporates water efficiency measures.

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Justification

13.138   The Cheshire East area predominantly covers the Cheshire Plain, a flat, lowland area, which is characterised by watercourses running in well-defined floodplains and localised areas of hilly terrain. To the northeast, this includes part of the western Peak District, an upland area forming the southern end of the Pennines. This area has steep topography, and is characterised by steep sided valleys and large numbers of minor watercourses.

13.139   The main source of flood risk in Cheshire East is from main rivers and Ordinary Watercourses. Whilst the overall level of risk from these sources is low, there are principal town centres such as Crewe, Macclesfield and in Key Service Centres such as Congleton, where risk is greater due to the presence of a densely urban population. In these urban areas, watercourses can

often be modified with straightened and culverted sections, especially where rivers flow underneath major railway and road infrastructure.

13.140   Cheshire East Council (CEC) published the Cheshire East Level 1 Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP) in July 2012. The SWMP project brought together existing flood risk information from CEC, the Environment Agency and United Utilities to assess the surface water flood risk across the study area, first through a strategic review of flood risk and then an assessment of particular sites potentially at high risk from flooding. The strategic review of flood risk across the study area has indicated that the overall level of surface water flood risk is moderate. In particular:

- Due to the flat nature of the topography, there is likely to be extensive surface water flooding resulting from an extreme rainfall event. This flooding is unlikely to be deep or fast flowing, except in localised areas, and only small numbers of properties are likely to be affected.
- Deep flooding is only likely to be experienced where there are localised low-points, such as natural closed depressions, or man-made features, for example underground car parks or subways.
- In a small number of locations, steep topography is likely to result in surface water flooding along well defined flow-paths. Flooding in these areas has the potential to represent a significant hazard to people due to its velocity and depth.
- There are likely to be a number of locations throughout the study area where surface water and fluvial flooding mechanisms are likely to interact. In these areas, it may be difficult to identify the exact source of any flooding, and CEC and the Environment Agency will have to work together to manage these issues.
- There are a large number of Ordinary Watercourses within the study area, some of which run through urban areas. In many cases, these watercourses have been culverted over and are likely to be in poor condition. A blockage or collapse of one of these culverts could represent a significant flood risk to adjacent properties.

13.141   As a Local Planning Authority, Cheshire East Council should use the flood risk evidence collected through the SFRA and SWMP to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding by directing development away from areas at highest risk, but where development is necessary, making it safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere. This should be carried out through the planning process, specifically during the development of the Local Plan.

13.142   The NPPF also states that Local Plans should '*take account of climate change over the longer term, including factors such as flood risk, coastal change, water supply and changes to biodiversity and landscape'.*

13.143   As a Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) the Council has a number of roles and responsibilities within local flood risk management as required under the Flood Risk Regulations 2009 and the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.

13.144   The Flood Risk Regulations require the Council to develop a Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA). The Cheshire East PFRA was published in June 2011. The PFRA did not identify a Flood Risk Area using the national significant thresholds set by Defra. As a result, the next stages of the PFRA process, the requirement to develop flood risk hazard mapping and Flood Risk Management Plans, do not apply to Cheshire East Council. However, the Environment Agency is currently in the process of updating their national Flood Map for Surface Water (uFMfSW), which is expected to meet the requirements for flood risk hazard mapping and will be available to Cheshire East Council later in 2013.

13.145   Under the Flood and Water Management Act, Cheshire East, as the LLFA, has responsibility for developing a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS) for their area covering local sources of flooding. The local strategy produced must be consistent with the national strategy. It will set out

Sustainable Environment

the local organisations with responsibility for flood risk in the area, partnership arrangements to ensure co-ordination between these, an assessment of the flood risk and plans and actions for managing the risk. The Strategy will outline how the Council intends to deliver its remaining duties under the Act. The Council now has additional permissive powers of control over ordinary watercourses to help manage flood risk across the Borough (notably new regulatory duties under Land Drainage Act 1991 and any associated Byelaws currently being considered).

13.146   The Cheshire East LFRMS is currently being prepared and the findings of the Cheshire East SFRA and the Cheshire East SWMP should help inform its development.

13.147   Wider national policy contained within Catchment Flood Management Plans (CFMPs) and River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) should also influence how flood risk is managed at a local level.

13.148   A CFMP provides a detailed overview of flood risk from multiple sources and policies for long-term management of flood risk within the catchment that take into account the likely impacts of climate change, the effects of land use and land management, deliver multiple benefits and contribute towards sustainable development. This is critical when areas under development pressure coincide with high flood risk.

13.149   Chosen policies and actions can be used to influence the location of development. Development should be focused towards the more 'sustainable' areas in terms of lower risk of flooding or where flood risk management is considered viable within the short and long-term plans. Development should be avoided in those areas where it is deemed inappropriate, to reduce flood risk now and in the future. Therefore, development should not rely on the future policy direction, as Environment Agency led Flood Risk Management infrastructure investment is not there to support future development, but rather to protect current properties and people at risk. Where development is planned in high risk areas, private (developer) funding will be required to reduce risk. In this instance, development may not be viable. Cheshire East is located in two CFMP catchments; the Upper Mersey and the Weaver Gowy.

13.150   The Water Framework Directive (WFD) is to deliver improvements across Europe in the management of water quality and water resources as well as improving the physical state of water courses and improving in-channel habitat. The WFD requires all inland and coastal waters to reach "good ecological status" by 2015 through a catchment-based system of River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs). The Water Environment Regulations (2003) transposed the WFD into law in England and Wales and the Environment Agency is leading on its delivery.

13.151   Cheshire East is within the North West River Basin District and the Environment Agency published the final North West River Basin Management Plan in December 2009. The main responsibility for the Council is to work with the Environment Agency to develop links between river basin management planning and the development of Local Authority plans, policies and assessments. In particular, the programme of actions (measures) within the River Basin Management Plan highlights the need for:

- Water Cycle Strategies,
- Considering the WFD objectives (achieving good status or potential as appropriate) in the spatial planning process, including LDDs and Sustainable Community Strategies, and
- Promoting the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) in new development.

13.152   Cheshire East Council has set up strategic partnerships with Cheshire West and Chester Council, Warrington BC, Halton BC and St Helens BC. The Cheshire and Mid Mersey Partnership Group also serves to ensure consistency amongst the Councils in their approach to water management issues.

Sustainable Environment

13.153 New development should incorporate water efficiency measures as much as is practicable. Standards of water efficiency for residential and commercial development will be further defined at Site Allocations and Development Policies stage.

Key Evidence

1.   Cheshire East Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
2.   Cheshire East Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment
3.   Cheshire East Surface Water Management Plan
4.   Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2003

Jodrell Bank

Policy SE 14

Jodrell Bank

1.   Within the Jodrell Bank Radio Telescope Consultation Zone, as defined on the Proposals Map, development will not be permitted if it:

     i.   Impairs the efficiency of the telescopes; or
     ii.   Has an adverse impact on the historic environment and visual landscape setting of the Jodrell Bank Radio Telescope.

2.   Conditions will be imposed to mitigate identified impacts, especially via specialised construction techniques.

Justification

13.154 The Jodrell Bank site is one of the earliest planned sites for radio-telescopes in the world and is home to the iconic Lovell Telescope (Grade I listed Building) which is a prominent feature within the Cheshire East landscape.

13.155 The Council recognises that Jodrell Bank is a unique site which is of significant scientific and historical value. Accessible to the general public, this site is an important contribution to the Borough's tourism economy and has the potential to attract many more national and international visitors to the region.

13.156 Jodrell Bank is on the UK National Shortlist (the tentative list) for UNESCO in a bid for World Heritage site status due to its potential outstanding universal value.

13.157 The *Town and Country Planning (Jodrell Bank Radio Telescope) Direction 1973* sets out the zones and the type of development in which the Council must consult the University of Manchester.This policy aims to make sure that the telescopes retain their ability to receive radio emissions from space with minimum interference from electrical equipment.

13.158 The Council is currently considering providing further detailed policy and advice within the Site Allocations and Development Policies document

Key Evidence

1.   Town and Country Planning (Jodrell Bank Radio Telescope) Direction 1973

2. Jodrell Bank Design Guide (under preparation)
3. The protection and management of World Heritage sites in England (English Heritage)
4. Jodrell Bank Management Policies (under preparation)

Peak District National Park Fringe

Policy SE 15

Peak District National Park Fringe

1. Within the Peak District National Park Fringe[86] development that would affect the setting of the Peak District National Park will be resisted where it compromises the statutory designation and purposes of the National Park.

2. Development will be considered on its individual merits having particular regard to the type, scale and location taking account of the Peak District National Park Landscape guidelines and characteristics of the South West Peak and the adjoining areas of the Cheshire Plain.

Justification

The Peak District National Park is an asset of national, regional, and local importance. It was the first of 15 national parks in the United Kingdom to be designated for their spectacular landscapes, cultural heritage and wildlife, and for people to enjoy.

13.159 The Environment Act (1995) establishes the statutory purposes of national park designation, as:

- to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the national parks; and
- to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities [of the parks] by the public.

13.160 Section 62 of the Act places a general duty on all relevant authorities, statutory undertakers and other public bodies, to have regard to these purposes.

13.161 Special Qualities define what is distinctive and significant about the Peak District compared with other parts of the country. Understanding these qualities helps us to plan effectively and manage the national park in order to protect them.

13.162 In the Peak District National Park Core Strategy, they are described as valued characteristics and include:

- Natural beauty, natural heritage, landscape character and landscapes.
- Sense of wildness and remoteness.
- Clean air, earth and water.
- Importance of wildlife and the area's unique biodiversity.
- Thousands of years of human influence which can be traced through the landscape.
- Distinctive character of hamlets, villages and towns.
- Trees, woodlands, hedgerows, stone walls, field barns and other landscape features.

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86   As identified within the Local Landscape Designation Document (May 2013) as the 'Peak Park Fringe'

- Significant geological features.
- Wealth of historic buildings, parks and gardens.
- Opportunities to experience tranquillity and quiet enjoyment.
- Easy access for visitors and surrounding urban areas.
- Opportunities to experience dark night skies.
- Vibrancy and a sense of community.
- Cultural heritage of history, archaeology, customs, traditions, legends, arts, and literary associations.
- Opportunities for outdoor recreation and adventure.
- Environmentally friendly methods of farming and working the land.
- Craft and cottage industries.
- Opportunities to improve physical and emotional well-being.
- Special values attached to the national park by surrounding urban communities.
- The flow of landscape character across and beyond the national park boundary.

13.163   The Peak District National Park is a complex tapestry of different landscapes in which there are three distinct areas. The South West Peak sits along the boundary of the Peak Park Fringe but also includes parts of this area in order to reflect the flow of landscape character (a feature which is reflected in the list of special qualities above). It is particularly characterised by its sloping valleys with woodlands which are described within the Peak District National Park Landscape strategy as: '*a pastoral landscape with a varied undulating topography of steep slopes, low ridges and incised valleys. Blocks of woodland are a characteristic feature of this landscape, together with patches of acid grassland and bracken on steeper slopes and higher ground. This is an area of traditional dispersed settlement with probable ancient origins. Views to lower ground are framed by woodlands and valley sides. This landscape covers extensive tracts of the western slopes of the South West Peak, in the landscapes rising above Macclesfield and Leek.*'

13.164   In places, the boundaries of the Peak District National Park follow administrative rather than landscape boundaries. Through consultation, the Council will seek to work with the Peak District National Park to ensure that all new developments within the Peak District National Park Fringe will not have an adverse impact upon the purposes of the Peak District National Park and its valued characteristics, having particular regard to the type and scale of the development and the Peak District National Park Landscape Assessment and Strategy.

Key Evidence

1.   Environment Act 1995 (Sections 61 & 62)
2.   Peak District National Park Core Strategy
3.   Peak District National Park Management Plan
4.   The Peak District National Park Landscape Strategy and Action Plan 2009-2019

Sustainable Environment

14
Connectivity

14 Connectivity

14.1 National planning policy seeks to reduce car use and to encourage people to adopt more sustainable travel habits. The NPPF requires local authorities to support a pattern of development that facilitates the use of sustainable modes of transport, locate significant trip generating development where the need to travel is minimised and promote a mix of uses within walking distance of homes.

14.2 The targets for housing and employment growth in the Borough further strengthen the need for adequate supporting infrastructure including the provision of new transport infrastructure, measures to restrain car use and increase use of public transport, cycling and walking as well as other improvements.

14.3 The relationship between Local Transport Plans and the Core Strategy is crucial to implementing the objective of managing transport demand and promoting accessibility and integration, both across Cheshire East and with neighbouring areas. The Local Plan Strategy aims to capitalise on the strengths of the existing transport system in Cheshire East, including good transport links to major centres by way of the rail and motorway network. It sets out how we will seek to improve connectivity in the future.

14.4 The scale of development proposed will require significant investment in transport infrastructure and a step change in the provision of public transport and other sustainable modes. The economic strength of Cheshire East, and the quality of life on offer, very much depend on the accessibility, speed, quality and cost of transport facilities. Therefore, increasing accessibility and promoting sustainable travel is a key theme within the Local Plan Strategy.

14.5 We must also be realistic about the challenges we face. The way we travel is changing to adapt to climate change and new technologies, the age profile of the population and shifts in the global economy.

14.6 Good transport links are crucial for a successful economy, thriving towns and rural areas and a good quality of life for all our residents. We want to make sure that our transport system enables people to safely get to the places they want to, when they want to, that people can walk and cycle as a real alternative to the car and that our transport system is integrated across all modes of transport.

Sustainable Travel and Transport

14.7 The challenge for the Local Plan Strategy is twofold; to redress shortfalls in infrastructure and improve connectivity to support economic growth, whilst changing the need for travel and the way we travel, by promoting new and sustainable options.

Policy CO 1

Sustainable Travel and Transport

To deliver the Council objectives of delivering a safe, sustainable, high quality, integrated transport system that encourages a modal shift away from car travel to public transport, cycling and walking; supportive of the needs of residents and businesses and preparing for carbon free modes of transport, the Council will expect development to:

1. Reduce the need to travel by:

    i. Guiding development to sustainable and accessible locations or locations that can be made sustainable and accessible;

    ii.   Ensuring development gives priority to walking, cycling and public transport within its design;

    iii.   Encouraging more flexible working patterns and home working;

    iv.   Supporting improvements to communication technology for business, education, shopping and leisure purposes;

    v.   Supporting measures that reduce the level of trips made by single occupancy vehicles; and

2.   Improve pedestrian facilities so that walking is attractive for shorter journeys[87] including:

    i.   Supporting the priority of pedestrians at the top of the road user hierarchy and making sure that in settlements, town centres and residential areas, the public realm environment reflects this priority;

    ii.   Supporting safe and secure access for mobility and visually impaired persons including mobility scooter users and parents with pushchairs;

    iii.   Creating safe and secure footways and paths linking with public transport and other services;

    iv.   Ensuring new developments are convenient, safe and pleasant to access on foot; and

    v.   Supporting work to improve canal towpaths and Public Rights of Way where they can provide key linkages from developments to local facilities.

    vi.   Supporting measures that introduce safe routes to schools.

    vii.   Ensuring a selective and ongoing review of speed limits, as appropriate.

3.   Improve cyclist facilities so that cycling is attractive for shorter journeys[88] including:

    i.   Creating safe and pleasant links for cyclists travelling around the Borough;

    ii.   Providing secure cycle parking facilities at new developments, at public transport hubs, town centres and at community facilities;

    iii.   Improving route signing;

    iv.   Working with community groups to develop local cycling initiatives and seek external funding to assist with the development of the local network; and

    v.   Supporting the priority for cyclists over single occupancy vehicles by making sure that in settlements, town centres and residential areas, the public realm environment reflects this priority whenever possible.

4.   Improve public transport integration, facilities, service levels, access for all users and reliability[89] including:

    i.   Rail infrastructure - current schemes comprise:

        a.   Improvements to Crewe Railway Station, promoting its role as a national rail hub and providing associated connectivity for buses;

        b.   Supporting the aspiration for re-opening the Sandbach to Northwich railway line to passengers including the opening of a station at Middlewich;

        c.   Supporting proposals for rail infrastructure and the provision of rail facilities as appropriate; and

        d.   Engaging in proposals for improving rail connectivity through High Speed Rail;

    ii.   Bus Infrastructure - current schemes comprise:

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87   In line with policy S7: Walking and Y1: Travel to Education of the Local Transport Plan 2011-2026

88   In line with Policy S8: Cycling of the Local Transport Plan 2011-2026

89   In line with policies S3: Public Transport (integration and facilities) and S4: Public Transport (service and reliability) of the Local Transport Plan 2011-2026

Connectivity

a. Improvements to Crewe Bus Station.

iii. Improving public transport service levels, which may involve developers temporarily subsidising new bus services or the extension of an existing service to provide additional journeys, or supporting community transport initiatives to enable sustainable access to new development;

iv. Engaging in proposals for improving rail connectivity through the Northern Hub capacity improvement scheme; and

v. Considering options to enhance Bus Priority at junctions and the provision of dedicated bus lanes.

vi. Considering opportunities to improve cross border connectivity with neighbouring areas

5. Improve and develop appropriate road, rail and water freight transport routes and associated intermodal freight transport facilities in order to assist in the sustainable and efficient movement of goods

Justification

14.8 The National Planning Policy Framework states that *"transport policies have an important role to play in facilitating sustainable development but also in contributing to wider sustainability and health objectives. Smarter use of technologies can reduce the need to travel. The transport system needs to be balanced in favour of sustainable transport modes, giving people a real choice about how they travel'.* Therefore *'encouragement should be given to solutions which support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and reduce congestion"*.

14.9 To effectively influence the individual's choice about their mode of travel, a range of options must be available that provide accessible, attractive, safe and reliable alternative options in respect of cost, time and convenience. Public transport has an important role to play in planning for sustainability and future needs by facilitating sustainable developments, as well as by encouraging a shift towards low carbon transport. An increase in the number of shorter journeys made on foot will contribute towards sustainability by reducing carbon emissions, as well as being beneficial for health and tackling congestion.

14.10 Investment in a high quality public realm linking housing, employment and town and village centres encourages people to walk and cycle and positively manages vehicular access that enables more sustainable patterns of travel. Well designed places with excellent public realm can quickly establish the key function of a place therefore promoting the legibility of towns and villages, and encouraging more sustainable lifestyles.

14.11 Cheshire East has strong links with neighbouring areas with an extensive road and rail network including the M6 and West Coast Main Line giving access to Greater Manchester and London Euston.

14.12 An effective freight network is essential for delivering sustainable economic growth. However, roads through residential areas would not be considered appropriate.

14.13 Policy Y1 (Travel to Education) of the Local Transport Plan 2011-2026 states that the Council will work with schools and colleges to enable sustainable travel to education, including appropriate provision for those eligible for free or assisted transport.

14.14 Policy H8 (Road Safety) of the Local Transport Plan 2011-2026 states that the Council will improve road safety and take account of vulnerable road users. This includes the consideration of where reduced speed limits would be appropriate (e.g. 20s Plenty Campaign for residential areas)

14.15 As currently proposed, the line of High Speed 2 (HS2) passes through the Borough. HS2 will have significant benefits for the Borough and the sub-region and is anticipated to connect to the West Coast Main Line just south of Crewe and will travel through parts of the Borough. In addition, Manchester Airport lies immediately to the north of the Borough offering world wide services.

14.16 Improved cross boundary and public transport connections are sought with all surrounding Local Authority areas and will be progressed through ongoing Duty to Co-operate arrangements.

Key Evidence

1. Cheshire East Local Transport Plan 2011-2026
2. Cheshire East Local Transport Plan - Implementation Plan 2011-15
3. Cheshire East Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2011-2026
4. Cheshire East Rights of Way Improvement Plan - Implementation Plan 2011-2015
5. Town Strategies for Alsager, Congleton, Middlewich, Sandbach and Wilmslow, Draft Town Strategies for Crewe, Handforth, Knutsford, Macclesfield, Nantwich and Poynton.

Policy CO 2

Enabling Business Growth Through Transport Infrastructure

The Council will support new developments that are (or can be made) well connected and accessible by:

1. Minimising the future need to travel by locating new development in locations where there is a good range of housing, jobs, shops and services already accessible by public transport, cycling and walking[90].
2. Enabling development by supporting transport infrastructure, regeneration and / or behaviour change initiatives that will mitigate the potential impact of development proposals[91] including:

   i. Supporting schemes outlined within the current Infrastructure Delivery Plan / Local Transport Plan.

   ii. Where new or improved infrastructure is provided, supporting measures to improve the walking, cycling and sustainable travel environment on routes relieved of traffic;

   iii. Supporting improvements to communication technology for business, education, shopping and leisure purposes;

   iv. Supporting the improvement of rail infrastructure - especially facilities at railway stations;

   v. Supporting the improvement of national motorway network facilities, where appropriate and supported by the Highways Agency

   vi. Providing recharging points for hybrid or electric vehicles in major developments in order to reduce carbon emissions; and

   vii. Adhering to the current adopted Cheshire East Council Parking Standards for Cars and Bicycles set out in Appendix C (Parking Standards).

3. The Council will support the economic benefits of High Speed 2 whilst ensuring that environmental and community impacts are minimised.
4. The Council will work with neighbouring transport authorities and support proposals which mitigate the wider impacts of development and improve connectivity, particularly by public

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90 In line with Policy S1: Spatial Planning of the Local Transport Plan 2011-2026
91 In line with Policy B2: Enabling Development of the Local Transport Plan 2011-2026

Connectivity

transport, so that the opportunities provided by economic growth can be accessible to a wider population.

5. Proposals for the safeguarding of disused transport corridors will be supported. Recreational and appropriate uses for disused transport corridors may be allowed provided they do not preclude eventual re-use for transport purposes or impact on public safety.[92]

Justification

14.17   Paragraph 17 of the NPPF states that *'significant development should be focused in locations which are or can be made sustainable'* Good transport connections are integral to our ambitious plans for economic growth and to the protection of our environment to ensure a sustainable future for all our residents and businesses.

14.18   A selection of the major highway schemes listed in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan include:

- Improvements to the Crewe Green Roundabout junction and completion of Crewe Green Link Road South
- Macclesfield Town Centre Movement Strategy
- Congleton Link Road
- Poynton Relief Road
- Middlewich Eastern Bypass
- Junction improvements on the A51 corridor north of Nantwich
- Improvements to the A534 corridor in Sandbach, including the M6 and A533 junctions
- Improvements to the A34 and A555 corridors in Handforth
- Improvements to the A537/A50 corridor through Knutsford
- Improvements to the junction of B5077 Crewe Road/B5078 Sandbach Road in Alsager

14.19   Climate change is nationally recognised as one of the most important challenges facing our society. Transport accounts for 25% of the carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions in the UK and personal car travel is the single biggest contributor to individual CO_2 emissions.

14.20   Statistics indicate that, in 2011, Cheshire East's residents, commerce and industry and other non-residential energy uses resulted in carbon dioxide emissions of 3.159m tonnes. This equates to 8.5 tonnes of CO_2 emissions per person, which is more than the regional average of 7.0 tonnes per person. However, CO_2 emissions per person have fallen in recent years: from 10.6 tonnes in 2005 and 9.2 tonnes in 2010[93]. This has implications for local, regional and national air quality.

14.21   One of the most important ways of reducing carbon emissions is to reduce the need to travel, particularly by private car, and to encourage more sustainable modes of transport such as cycling, walking, buses and trains. Development should be located in areas close to existing facilities and shops, and to transport hubs and bus routes. Maintaining or increasing the mix of uses in an area reduces the need to travel, as well as adding vitality and diversity.

14.22   The improvement of key transport links on the highway network will allow a better use of the network for bus users and cyclists. There is also the potential for high occupancy vehicle lanes to be provided in the future.

Connectivity

92   This applies to sites of former railway stations, sidings etc, as well as to the alignment of the line. Such areas can provide essential space for interchanges, car parking, or other facilities associated with the new transport route.
93   Local and Regional CO2 Emissions Estimates for 2005-11, produced by Richardo - AEA for the Department of Energy and Climate Change, Jul 2013. www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-of-energy-climate-change/series/sub-national-greenhouse-gas-emissions-statistics

14.23   Another key element is to facilitate, where possible, ICT, broadband and other technologies that remove the need to travel and to facilitate local access to these technologies. A flexible approach to the emergence and uptake of new technologies will also be required where these offer attractive and affordable communication or transport solutions.

14.24   The Council will seek to ensure that development includes adequate parking provision for cars and bicycles. This should be based on the car parking standards set out in Appendix C.

14.25   There is a case for Britain to develop a high-speed rail network, primarily because there is a need for additional rail capacity in the future if we are to keep our economy moving. Building a high-speed railway (rather than a conventional speed one) is the best way to do this, as the faster journey times encourage people to switch from other, more carbon-hungry, modes of transport such as aviation or car. Building new fast lines also frees up space on the current railway system to allow more commuter or freight services, delivering further economic and environmental benefits.

14.26   High Speed 2 (HS2) is the most significant transport infrastructure project in the UK since the motorways were built in the 1950s and 1960s. It will provide a high speed rail line between London and Birmingham and on to Manchester and Leeds. Further details regarding HS2 will be included in the Site Allocations and Development Policies Development Plan Document.

Key Evidence

1.   Cheshire East Local Transport Plan 2011-2026
2.   Cheshire East Infrastructure Delivery Plan
3.   Cheshire East Local Transport Plan - Implementation Plan 2011-15
4.   Cheshire East Council's Business Travel Planning Guidance
5.   Cheshire East Parking Guidance
6.   Town Strategies for Alsager, Crewe, Congleton, Handforth, Knutsford, Macclesfield, Middlewich, Nantwich, Poynton, Sandbach and Wilmslow.

Digital Connections

14.27   Digital technologies have been a major driving force in influencing and shaping industry and society in the 21st Century. Changes that are currently transforming our working, learning, leisure and community environments should be given due consideration and accommodated in the future spatial design of Cheshire East.

Policy CO 3

Digital Connections

1.   High capacity, leading edge digital communication networks will be supported in Cheshire East to meet the needs of businesses and communities, subject to the number(s) of radio and telecommunications masts (and sites for such installations) being appropriately located and kept to a minimum and consistent with the efficient operation of the network.
2.   Developers will be required to work with appropriate providers to deliver the necessary physical infrastructure to accommodate information and digital communications (ICT) networks as an integral part of all appropriate new developments.

Connectivity

Justification

14.28   The National Planning Policy Framework states that *'advanced, high quality communications infrastructure are essential for sustainable economic growth. The development of high speed broadband technology and other communications networks also plays a vital role in enhancing the provision of local community facilities and services. In preparing Local Plans, local planning authorities should support the expansion of electronic communications networks, including telecommunications and high speed broadband'.*

14.29   New developments must be 'future-proof' with appropriate digital infrastructure that will meet existing and future communication needs. It is essential that the Council works with developers to make sure that the appropriate digital infrastructure is incorporated, including 4G and 5G networks.

Key Evidence

1.   Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership Business Plan (2012 - 2015)
2.   Connecting Cheshire Initiative

Travel Plans and Travel Assessments

Policy CO 4

Travel Plans and Transport Assessments

All major development proposals that are likely to generate significant additional journeys will be accompanied by a Transport Assessment and, where appropriate, a Travel Plan which will address the following requirements:

1.   The Transport Assessment will need to demonstrate that the capacity and efficiency of the highway network will not be severely affected as a result of the development. This should be undertaken in accordance with the latest Cheshire East Council guidance;
2.   The Transport Assessment and associated Travel Plan should demonstrate how the proposed development will link into and enhance existing walking, cycling or public transport infrastructure;
3.   The Travel Plan will need to propose measures that will mitigate the impact of increased trips generated on the highway network;
4.   The Travel Plan should propose measures to facilitate and encourage the use of sustainable travel alternatives (such as walking, cycling or public transport use), whilst discouraging single occupancy vehicle travel and parking; and
5.   Major developments will be required to monitor the effectiveness of the travel plan and the traffic generated by that development and share data with the Local Authority.

Justification

14.30   The National Planning Policy Framework states that *'all developments that generate significant amounts of movement should be supported by a Transport Statement or Transport Assessment'.*

14.31   Proposals for developments that are likely to have a significant transport impact will be required to include a Transport Assessment and / or associated Travel Plan. This provides the opportunity to assess traffic generation, identify measures to reduce traffic congestion and improve accessibility by facilitating and encouraging sustainable modes of transport (walking, cycling, public transport use and car sharing).

Connectivity

14.32   A Travel Plan is essentially an action plan designed to help organisations implement measures to reduce the need for travel and to facilitate and encourage the remainder to travel more sustainably. It should help to reduce local traffic congestion, car parking problems and help to promote healthy lifestyles, economic growth and environmental improvements.

14.33   For any new development, it is important to encourage sustainable travel options from day one of occupation before car-based travel habits become established. Travel Plans can be origin-based (Residential Travel Plans) or destination-based (Workplace / Business Travel Plans).

14.34   Travel Plans can help overcome concerns about new development by finding new ways of addressing travel needs and demonstrating how to influence travel choices. They also offer numerous benefits to developers, businesses, employers, employees, residents and the local community. Further information on the purpose and benefits of Travel Plans and advice on how to prepare a Travel Plan is provided in the Cheshire East Travel Planning Guidance Note.

Key Evidence

1.   Cheshire East Local Transport Plan 2011-2026
2.   Cheshire East Local Transport Plan - Implementation Plan 2011-15
3.   Cheshire East Travel Planning Guidance Note

Connectivity